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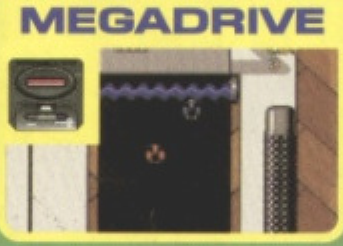
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RAYMAN EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

SIM CITY 2000 MY KIND OF TOWN!

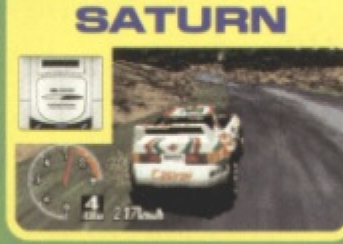
VECTORMAN RASTER-BLASTING REVIEW

MEGADRIVE



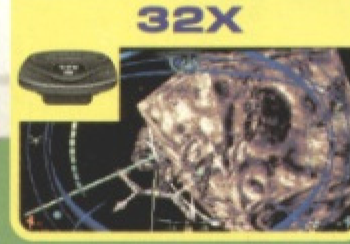
MICRO MACHINES '96

SATURN



SEGA RALLY

32X



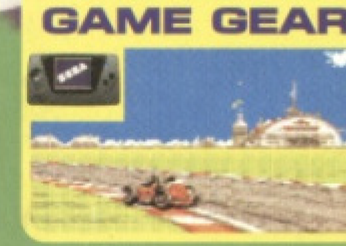
DARXIDE

MEGA-CD

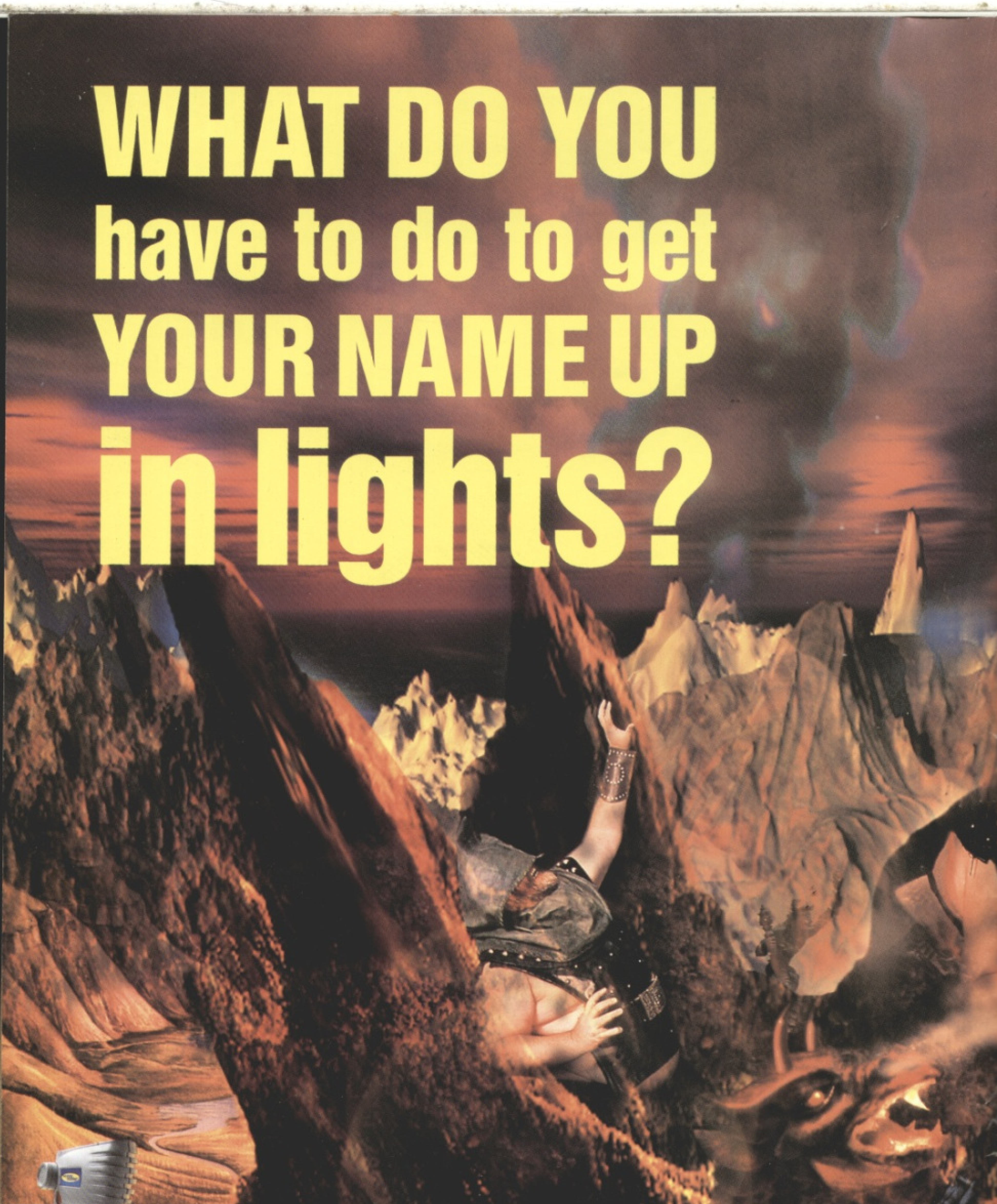


RDF

GAME GEAR



STREET RACER



Ever wished the world knew how good you are? **Introducing Hyperscore,** the telephone network communicator that jacks you into a national games league then publishes your name in the Daily Mirror and on on Teletext Ch4 P. 438 (providing you cut it). It's a doddle to use…just slot in your game cartridge into Hyperscore (Hyperscore comes as either **SNES™ or Sega Megadrive™**

Teletext
ON CH.4 P.438



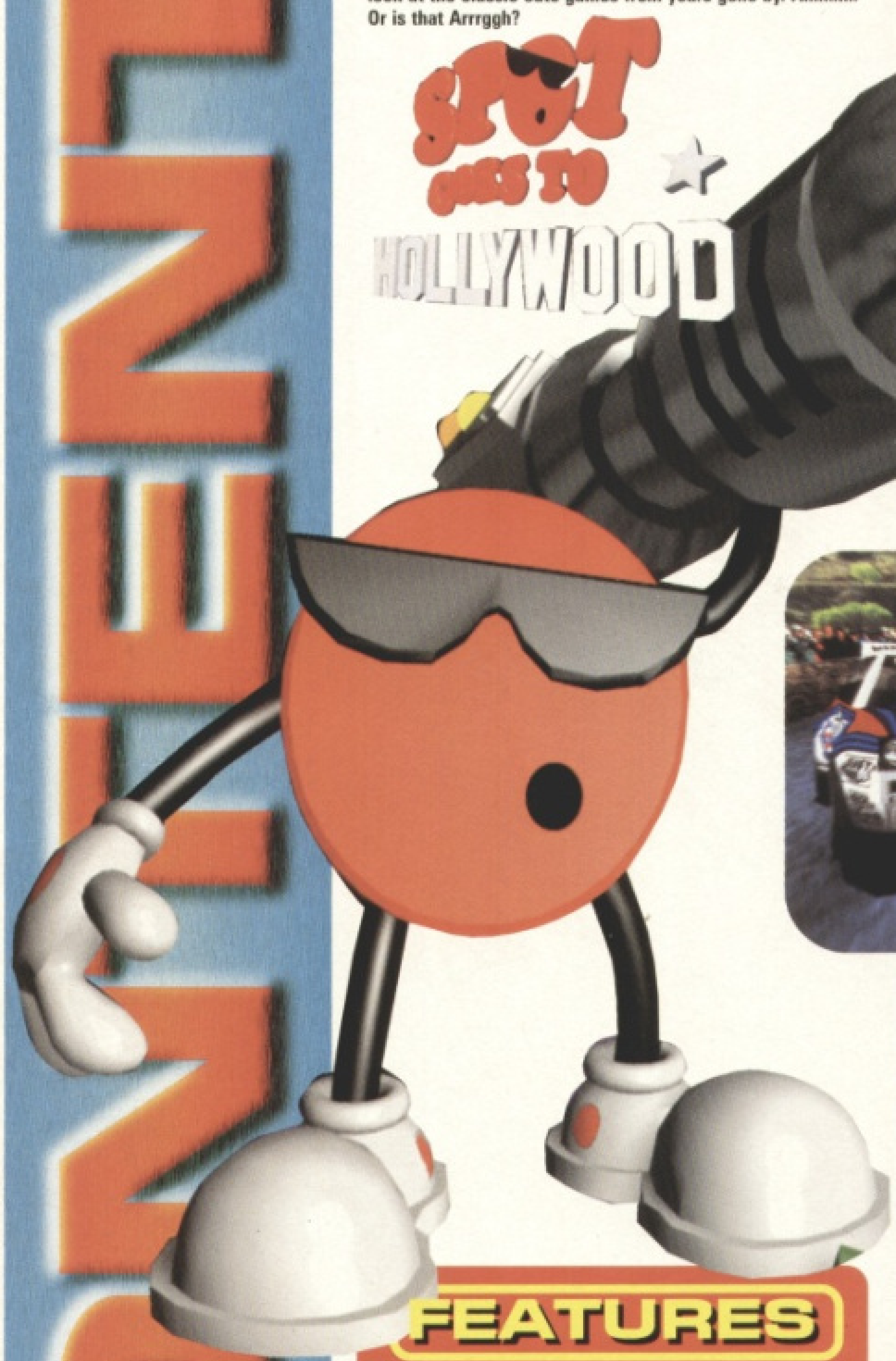
compatible)... hold it to your phone and download your score to get an instant ranking. The hard bit is getting to No1. Every quarter Hyperscore updates with all your fave 16 bit games, plus eight new leagues, and there's a truckload of prizes to be won. If you've got a High score you need Hyperscore.

HYPER SCORE

Without Hyperscore you're nowhere.

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COVER STORY



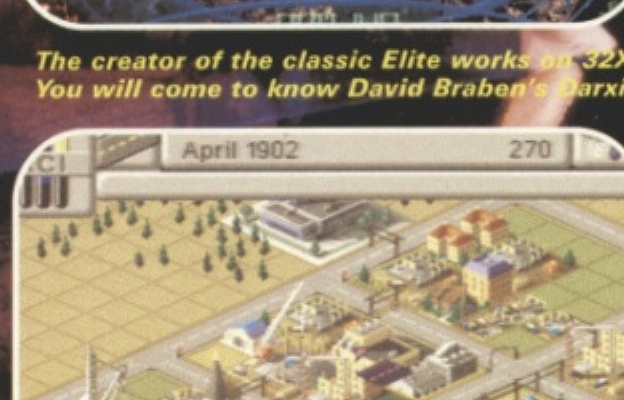
REGULARS



Mud, mud glorious mud! The Saturn revels in Rally!



The creator of the classic Elite works on 32X: You will come to know David Braben's Darxide.

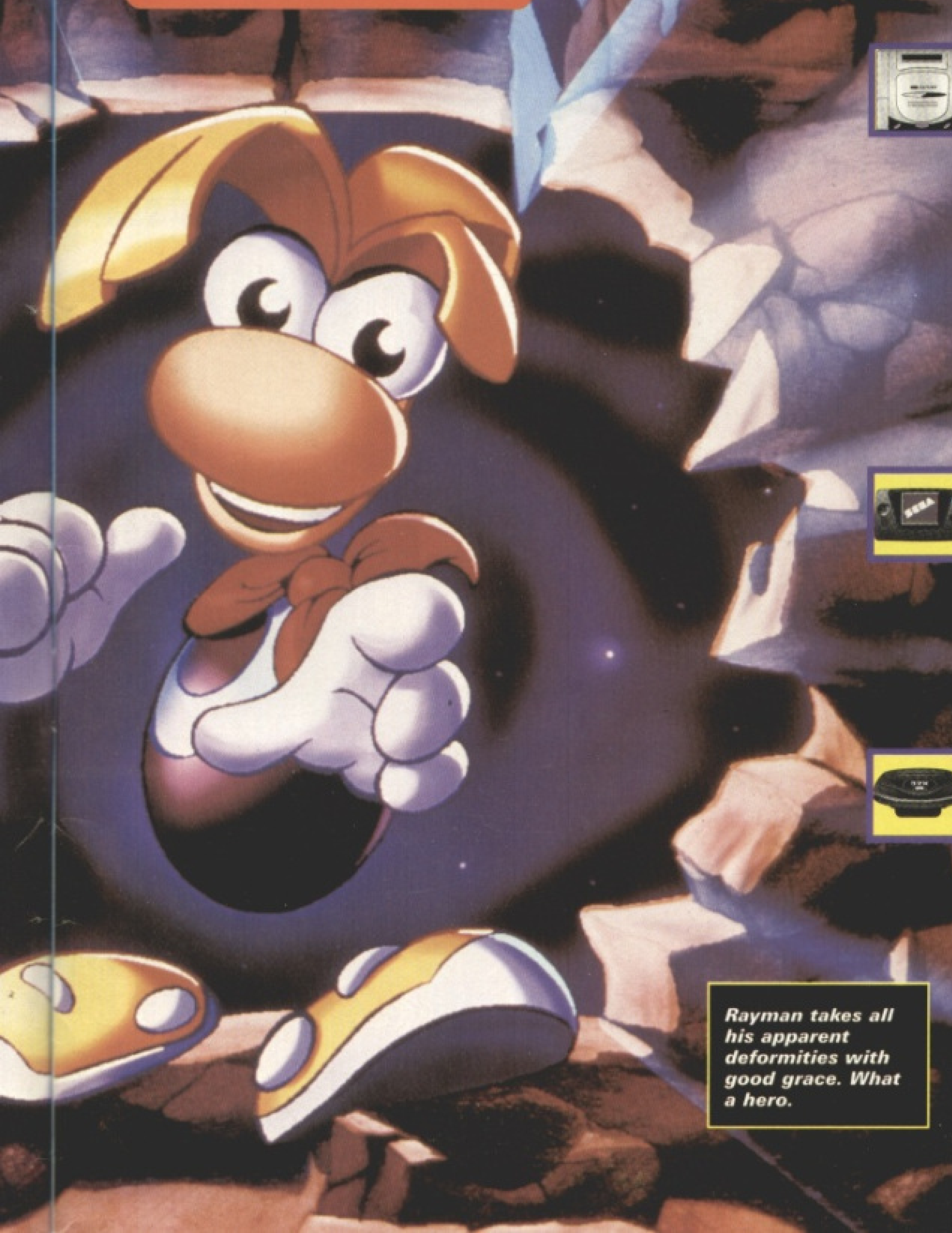


Despite all the traffic, noise and grime it's still a beaitiful world. Start building your own with Sim City 2000.

FEATURES

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PREVIEWS



Rayman takes all his apparent deformities with good grace. What a hero.

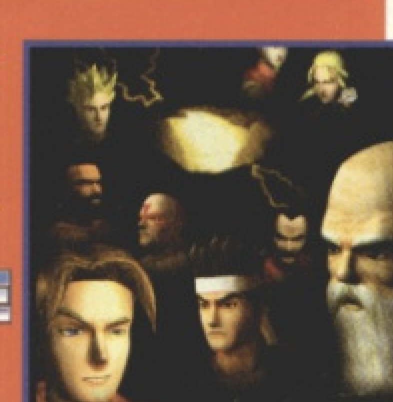
REVIEWS

MEGADRIVE

SATURN

GAME GEAR

32X



EDITORIAL

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

1. I was talking to some top developers in America (just had to throw in my expenses-paid trip there) and their comments about the Saturn were revealing and encouraging. Some people have been making sarky comments about the look of early Saturn games and it's, er, rivals: okay, let's make no bones about it – Sony's Playstation. But did you know that Playstation games are created using a series of libraries developed by Sony? At the moment, freedom to 'fiddle' with the machine beyond these is limited. On the other hand, the Saturn is open for programmers to exploit and explore, with its complex 8 processor structure. This makes it harder to get around at first, but many now rate it as a real "programmer's machine". Also, in some areas the Saturn is a dream machine: take textured polygons. On Sega's machine, you can texture every surface with no speed loss – on the Playstation, every single texture map takes a chunk of processor time.

2. Sega are excited about some of their future projects. They have every reason to be. I've just seen Virtua Fighter 2 running and it is AWESOME. Sega Rally you can see for yourself in this issue, but Sega are already looking to the next batch for 1996. We'll be bringing you each compelling reason to buy Saturn in the coming issues.



Gus

HAIRDO HELL

So sick were we of doling out cash to any tom, dick or harriet who sent in a picture of a bad haircut, we decided to dredge our bottom drawers for some pictures so we could cop a few quid for ourselves...

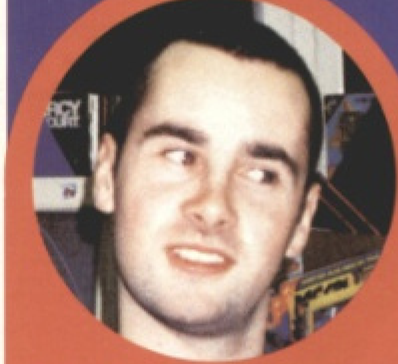
GUS

Angus very conveniently 'forgot' to bring an embarrassing picture from home, despite the fact we told his mum to remind him several times. In desperation, we trawled the archives of the British Museum and discovered a long-lost portrait of a distant ancestor. This foppish beau, oft caught spying for Mary Queen of Scots in the court of Elizabeth I, was ultimately hanged for treason. The resemblance is quite remarkable.



HAIRDON'TS

The MEAN MACHINES team recall their most disastrous attempts at styling self-improvement.



GUS

Angus plummed the depths of buzzcut banality a few weeks ago when he dyed a small patch of his bristles with the Sega logo. In fluorescent blue. He then attended the prestigious ECTS event at Olympia. Without a hat. For two whole days. "I had to," he shrugs, when asked to explain this mystifying behaviour. "I couldn't get the Mr Byrite logo on there – it's got two many letters in it." Gus is hoping to set up a face-painting stall at the next event. Which he plans to attend dressed as Cool Spot.



CLAIRE

"I've only really had three hairstyles," says Claire, who remembers the days when such things were rationed. "When I was at junior school I had my hair cut in a really trendy bob like Purdey from The New Avengers. Everyone used to call me Purdey." Unsurprising really. Claire strenuously denies that her lack of personal hygiene causes bits of food and assorted snacks to lodge between her strands for days on end. And the story about a small family of chaffinches nesting in her pigtails is apparently cobblers as well.



MARCUS

When Marcus was 16 he embarked on a voyage of tonsorial discovery when he decided to colour his hair. "Unfortunately," he grimaces," all I could lay my hands on was a can of gold hair dye. I spent ages in front of the mirror applying layers of this stuff which just went a dull bronze colour. It only went gold when I'd practically used up the whole can and this stuff was dripping down my head. I was later struck by a reference to a boy dying his hair gold in a Morrissey song and realised our destinies were inextricably intertwined." Hmmm.



MARCUS

"This wasn't taken that long ago really," admits Marcus. Who also admits he looked like a bit of a girl. "I got sick of all the heavy metal jokes. And all the scratching – it made my head very itchy when it was hot so I cut it off. My hair, that is."

CLAIRE

"I had this done when I was 21," says Claire. "I'd had the same haircut for 15 years and I was really bored with it so I had a nice perm. It made my face look fat, though, so I grew it out." Her hair, presumably.



LUCY

We'd need a special issue for the most bizarre corners of Lucy's photograph album, but she specially selected the highlights for us...



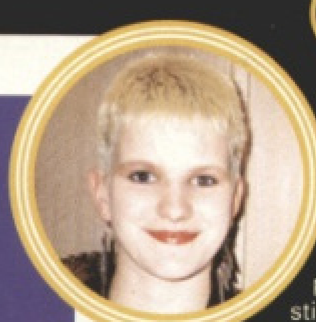
1

"This is me when I was 14. The picture was taken in a train station in Italy. My mum doesn't cut my hair any more."



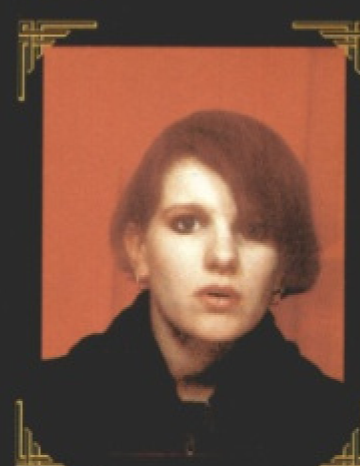
2

"This was a year later, on a skiing trip. I'd had it cut short to make my head more aerodynamic on the slopes."



3

"A few months on, and I was going through my Hazel O'Connor phase. I've still got the dungarees."



4

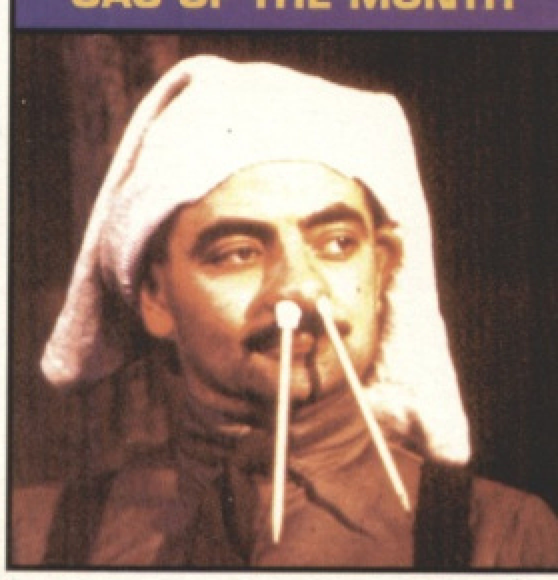
"I drifted around Europe and eventually fell in with the Human League, who were touring for the first time. They kicked me out after a while and Phil Oakey stole my fringe. He still hasn't given it back. Git."



LUCY

"I've had loads of hairstyles," says our new picture munchkin, Lucy Hill. "When I was 12 I had blonde tips and I got sent to the headmistress. She told me to get them cut out so I had a flat top and then I had a skinhead. Trouble was, because I've got a deep voice everyone thought I was a bloke and called me Manhill. I went through a Brylcreem phase as well. I remember one teacher told me it looked like someone had tipped a pan of chip fat on my head." More from the hairdressing masterclass next month.

GAG OF THE MONTH



This issue, we dust off fond memories of the immortal Blackadder. Well, he wasn't that immortal because he got bumped off in the end of the last series, but anyway, he goes... BLACKADDER: That's Mad Angus MacMad. Last year's winner of the Mr Mad competition. Next month:Monty Python's Flying Circus.

HAIR BEAR BUNCH

BIG TED
Steve '1am-er' Merrett
BUNGLE
Gus 'nightmare scenario' Swan
CLAIRE BEAR
Claire 'gut rot' Coulthard
CARE BEAR
Marcus 'exterminate' Hearn
NOOKIE BEAR
Lucy 'champion' Hill

POLAR BEAR
Ed 'heavy concept' Lomas
FREELANCE GRIZZLY
Dave 'party animal' Kelsall
AD BEAR
Liza 'now it's legal' Merrett
TRIP HOP TEDDY
Ian 'tricky' Thompson
WINNIE THE POOH
Tina 'ECTS' Hicks

SPECIAL THANKS TO:Big thanks to Woody. Mark Kelly and the Spot crew, Dave Perry amd the Shiny Crew. Jaz.

Christine Hughes at First Independent for MK:Movie materials.

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NEWS SPECIAL

YOUR XCELL



NEW GAME BY SCAVENGER
FORMAT 32X

The hottest title from Sega's hot contract developer, Scavenger, is their X-Men game for 32X, which is set to redefine the power of the machine. MEAN MACHINES has managed to obtain two exclusive screenshots of the latest 'build' of the game, which is due for release just before Christmas.

In the current demo you play as Wolverine, but other X-men characters will feature in the final version, with different level scenarios for each. Scavenger have used their spatial algorithms to create the 3-D environment, the fastest moving seen on the 32X.



Gameplay-wise, X-Men has a strong Doom influence, with baddies appearing from doorways and along corridors, but here your responses are all the fantastic powers of the X-men team, rather than puny fire arms. Expect more on this in the next issue.





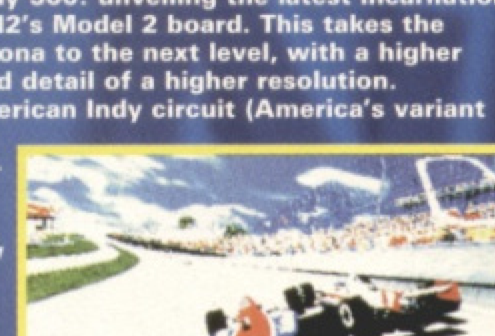
WHo wanta a stock car or a rally car when you can drive one of THESE!

NEW GAME BY SEGA
FORMAT ARCADE

ADVENTURES OF INDY

The next storming Sega coin-op to hit will be Indy 500: unveiling the latest incarnation of AM2's Model 2 board. This takes the amazing visuals from Daytona to the next level, with a higher polygon count and textured detail of a higher resolution.

The race setting is the American Indy circuit (America's variant on Formula 1) except the tracks are simpler, the racing dirtier and more dangerous, with 30 or more cars crammed onto narrow courses. Even better, the game is certainly slated for a Saturn release, with conversion work already underway. We guess that Indy may well be in the home within the first half of 1996!



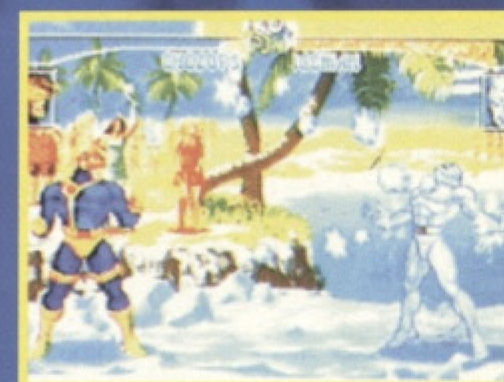
ENCIES!



NEW GAME BY CAPCOM
FORMAT SATURN

At last! The first concrete Saturn pics of X-Men: Children of the Atom on Saturn which is undoubtedly Capcom's best arcade game of the moment. In classic Streetfighter 2 style, the X-men team face each other and their greatest foes in a one-on-one beat 'em up. The game's greatest asset is its cartoon-style graphics, with huge player sprites.

Children of the Atom has already been signed to Acclaim for exclusive European release, and they've scheduled it for January on Saturn – beating the Playstation version.





A frosty reception, a ring of fire and a great big bloody sword in X-men.



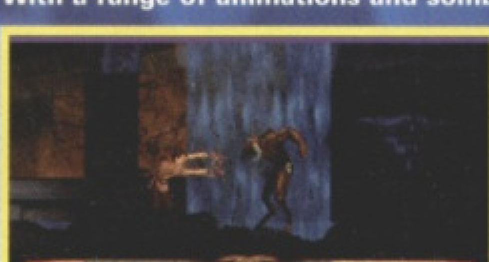


SPLIT ENDS

NEW GAME BY JVC
FORMAT SATURN

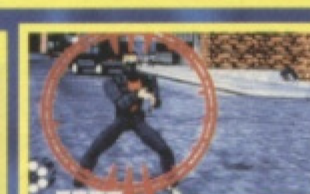
Split Realities is another addition to JVC's ambitious Saturn pre-Christmas release schedule. A new slant on the platform/beat 'em up genres, it features an athletic young man tackling the baddies that tend to congregate in alternate universes.

With a range of animations and sombre backdrops reminiscent of the seminal Flashback from Delphine, depth is added to the game by the use of objects to solve related puzzles. Size, in this case, also matters, with a large number of projected levels. Split Realities should follow on from JVC Boxing and Deadly Skies.



FOXY FORCE!

NEW GAME BY SEGA
FORMAT ARCADE



With the Saturn release of Virtua Cop only a Heartbeat away (chortle), news of the follow-up, on both arcade and Saturn versions comes forth. Virtua Cop 2 uses an enhanced Model 2 machine. But what about the new busty officer on the Force – Janet Marshall? She's apparently a police psychologist, which means she particularly enjoys blowing out nutters brains and then examining them. She joins her two male partners for a bout of rough justice.

JOHNNY B. GOOD!

NEW GAME BY
US GOLD
FORMAT
SATURN

Where have US Gold been? Rocking and rolling it would seem from their newest effort – Johnny Bazookatone. Johnny is a next-generation platformer starring a bequiffed character in possession of a strong sucking guitar.
He wanders through 20-odd levels of bizarre imp characters, attempting to return the music to the world. The developers have created some sumptious render graphics of immense proportions to fit out both foregrounds and sprites. The gameplay has been designed to integrate the various levels together, with simple object manipulation leading to puzzles. One scene has you arguing with a large bouncer, and there are various ways to effect an entry depending on what you have found.
As Johnny Bazookatone has a musical theme, the effort put into the soundtrack has been suitably large. The music programmer has his own band, and was given six months to jam before spending a year putting all kinds of diverse music styles into the game. Does it rock? Wait until January to find out.







TOH SHIN DEN

NEW GAME BY
TAKARA
FORMAT
SATURN

No tedious headline puns, because you can't really do much with Toh Shin Den, can you? Anyway, if you don't follow the Playstation gossip, Toh Shin Den is one of their top launch games. Now, rather sadly for them, Sega have announced a deal with Takara, the game developers, for an enhanced version to appear before Christmas.
Takara's inspiration is Virtua Fighter, as Toh Shin Den features similar virtual arenas, but there's also a touch of Takara's other coin-ops; Fatal Fury and Samurai Showdown. The Toh Shin Den crew are all a bit weird with magical, rather than physical, special attacks. Some of them even wear skirts.
Toh Shin Den should be worthy of multi-page attention soon, until then look at these screenshots.







DEF JAM

NEW GAME BY
GT
FORMAT
SATURN

GT Interactive have also taken on one of Britain's best known developers – Millennium, and their new Sci-fi epic: Defcon 5. It's all completely serious and grown-up, unlike Millennium's wacky James Pond games, as these screen shots testify.
It's been called 'Die Hard in space' with the game set in the 23rd century within the space mining operation of a large corporation. You play an engineer in the weapons division, out to restore the defence system for the mines, which fellow workers have deviously deactivated. Your own computer interface must be explored and practised with to enable you to play the game effectively.
First-person perspective graphics mix with FMV, though GT claim this is the closest to a truly interactive movie that anyone has come, with Millennium putting in two years of development.

A BIT OF AN ANIMAL

NEW GAME BY ACCLAIM
FORMAT SATURN



Bizarrest announcement of the month. Apparently the meaty finger character made famous by the Pepperami ads, is due to star in his own video game. Details beyond this are sketchy, apart from the end product 'reflecting the mad character' of the ads. Maybe next month we'll know a little bit more, even his name. Until then, any bets on it being a platform game?

HEXCELLENT!

NEW GAME BY GT
FORMAT SATURN

New kid on the Sega block, GT Interactive (the guys with MK3 on Saturn sewn up) have also stitched up a deal with Id Software (the guys who dreamt Doom up) to convert their Heretic game and it's brand new sequel, Hexen, to the Saturn. Both are heavily Doom-influenced, but with superior technology, and the current plan is to create a Heretic/Hexen best-of combo. Strangely enough, it should make it out before the Saturn conversion of the grandaddy of them all — Doom.



INTREPID TRILOGY

NEW GAME BY ACCLAIM
FORMAT SATURN

The history of Alien Trilogy, the game, has been almost as dramatic as the film series from which it comes. Okay, that may be overstating it a bit, but there have been some turns. A 32X version – now history – had a preposterous Summer '96 scheduled release.

Now you can see it, here on Saturn. It's a Doom clone, but one set to raise the hairs on the neck of most games-players, with superb motion capture on both players and aliens. And this monstrously big title is due for release in January. And did you know Sigourney Weaver has signed up for Alien 4? Despite copping it in Alien 3...





RAW POWER

NEW GAME BY ACCLAIM
FORMAT SATURN

Scene of much japery at the ECTS show was Acclaim's WWF Saturn game. The recent Raw game got a raw ride at MEAN MACHINES, but Acclaim are pretty bullish about this new one. The graphics are massive, with great wrestlers, each with a dozen or more special moves. These guys really smack each other about, and the game has a great feel. Can't wait for a review copy.



WWF Raw in action, and it grabbed the attention of many of the visitors to the ECTS show. Even if you have no interest for those dorks in leotards, you'll probably enjoy this.

Claire, what's the big idea? Do you think I have more to write about these pictures than any other. Okay, more wrestling action. Alright?



GAME ON!

The Game Gear renaissance continues with a clutch of new titles...

POWER RANGERS

NEW GAME BY SEGA



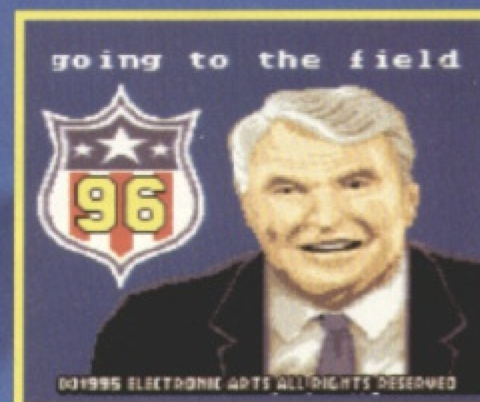
Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers The Movie is, unsurprisingly, a film license that drops everyone's favourite transforming teenagers into a number of different beat 'em up scenarios. Three different modes – story game, versus game and link game – are possible. All the baddies, all the tight suits and all the appalling dialogue are here in a game that presents as good a scenario for a beat 'em up as any.

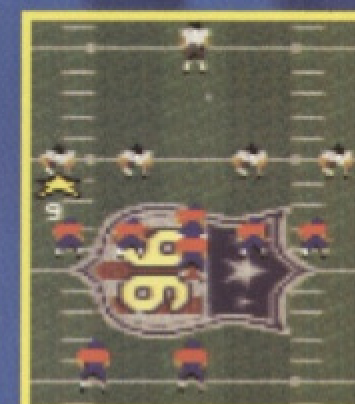


MADDEN '96

NEW GAME BY THQ

THQ's Game Gear premieres are conversions of classic sports titles from Electronic Arts' acclaimed range. Madden '96 sees your titular host, the genial Mr Maddden, shrunk down to miniscule proportions to host another session of incomprehensible American football between two teams of table-top weebles.

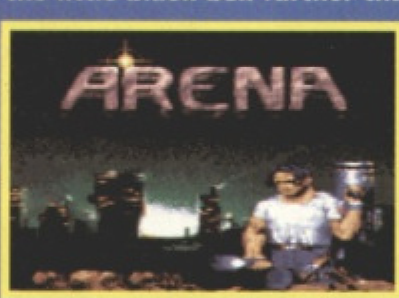


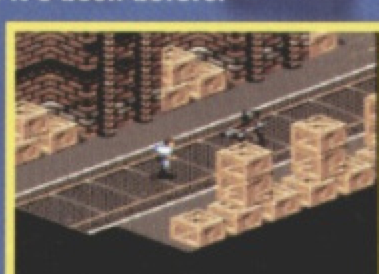


ARENA

NEW GAME BY SEGA

Arena is an innovative stab at an isometric puzzle/shoot 'em up. Set in a giant warehouse, you run from room to room combating such menaces as patrolling robots, trigger-happy guards and electric fences in your quest for the keys you need to open doors to the next level. The game features over two hundred rooms across 11 levels, and, according to Sega, will stretch the little black box further than it's been before.



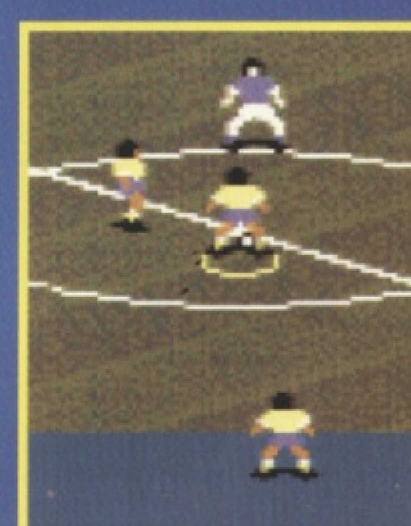


FIFA '96

Similar looking weebles play a far more sensible sport in the Game Gear's FIFA Soccer '96. Friendlies, leagues, tournaments and playoffs can all be played, with all the FIFA fine tuning and gameplay intact. Much more fun than Subbuteo, and considerably less embarrasing to play on the train.

NEW GAME BY THQ

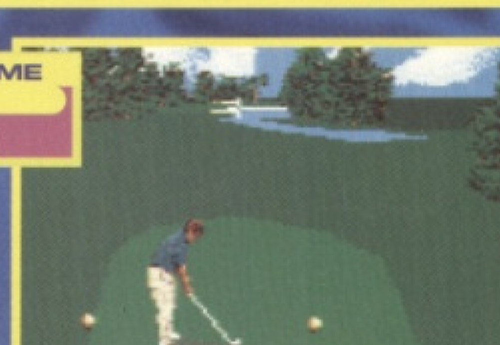


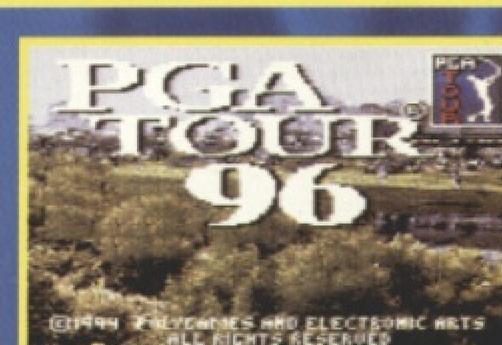


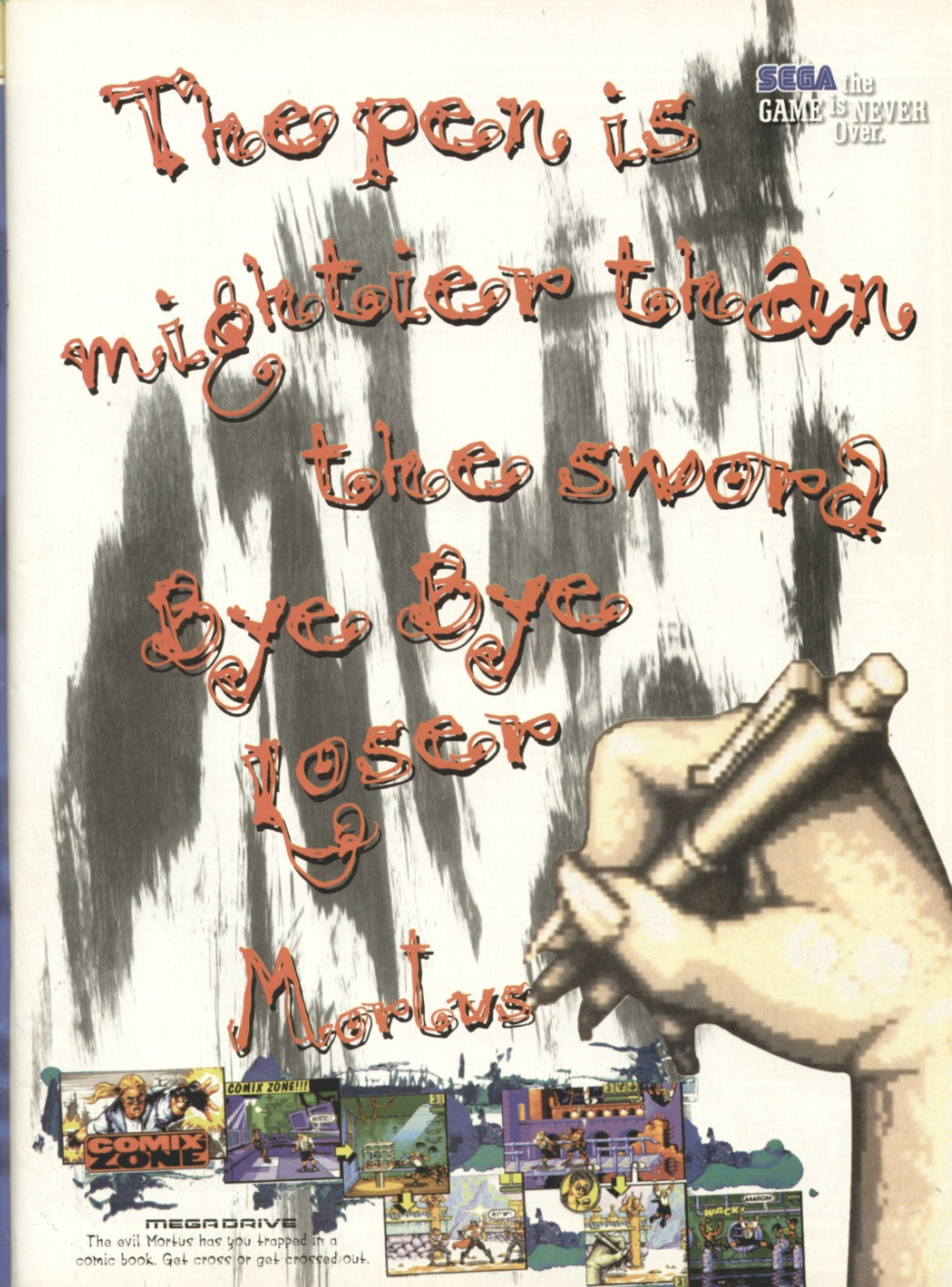
PGA '96

NEW GAME BY THQ

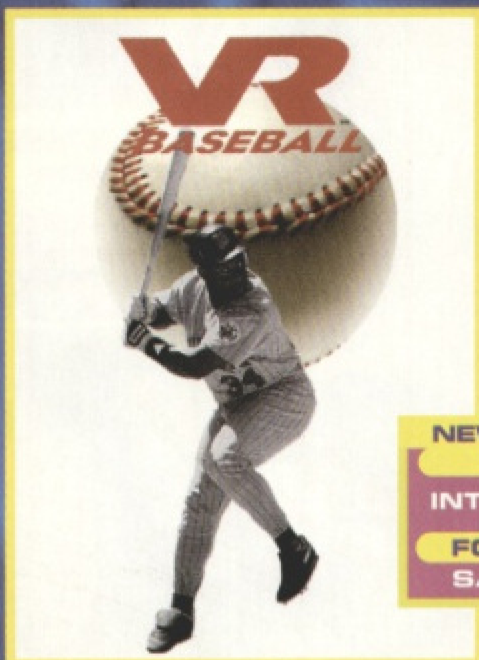
If a stroll along the fairway is more your idea of fun, the Game Gear version of PGA Tour '96 offers more sedate pleasures. Scrutinise your abysmal attempts to putt a ball at a distance of eighteen inches from the comfort of your favourite armchair. Calculate windspeed and drive power then carefully select your club. And still wind up in the bunker.







SEGA
the GAME is NEVER Over.
The pen is mightier than the sword
Bye Bye Loser
Mortus
COMIX ZONE
COMIX ZONE!!!
MEGADRIVE
The evil Mortus has you trapped in a comic book. Get cross or get crossed out.



BASE PLEASURES

NEW GAME BY INTERPLAY
FORMAT SATURN

VR Baseball headlines Interplay's new sports line-up, which should start hitting the Saturn in early 1996. The new brand comes from VR Sports, a dedicated division of Interplay Productions, using 3-D polygon technology and motion capture. Apparently, the team has been assembled by games programmers who play sports games themselves in order to get the right feel and attention to detail.
The basis of the game is 360 degree Virtual Fieldvision, Interplay's slant on virtual technology. The game itself has all the leagues and a manager mode that the stat-happy sports market demands. Future releases like VR Basketball and VR Hockey are planned to follow hot on the heels.

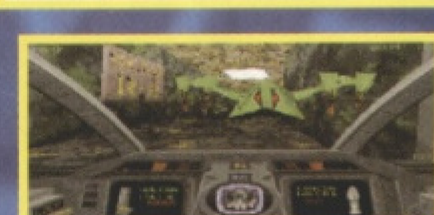
OUT OF YOUR DEPTH

NEW GAME BY INTERPLAY
FORMAT SATURN

After bringing you exclusive news of the Descent conversion two months ago, MEAN MACHINES has the first clutch of Saturn screenshots showcasing Interplay's hottest title of this year. It should generate a fair amount of hype for the Saturn game, which is due some time in early 1996, with work well underway.
Descent features that old game scenario stalwart – the mining complex. You pilot an anti-grav craft through the corridors and chambers of said warren, attacking the aliens and destroying the nuclear cores. It should translate excellently to console, but one area of interest is the multi-player/network option. Will Interplay incorporate a split-screen game, or even develop it for multi-machine play? This is one thing which we cannot, as yet, answer.



D E S C E N T

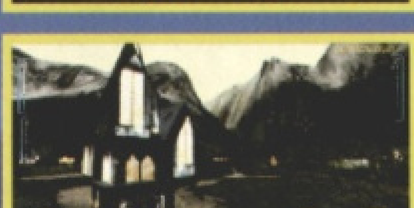


CYBERMAN



NEW GAME BY INTERPLAY
FORMAT SATURN





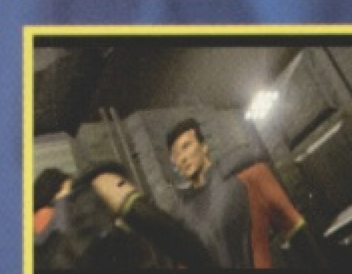
American company Interplay, a giant in the PC market who are now moving into consoles big time, have Cyberia in development with programmers Xatrix. It's a futuristic adventure that milks the sci-fi genre for its plot and action. Set in a dismal future of techno terrorists, the discovery of an ultimate weapon frozen in the arctic – nicknamed Cyberia – leads to a race against time.
Cyberia is a broad-ranging game using action shoot 'em up sections to bridge puzzle-based levels, many like those in Philips CD-i hit, Burn Cycle. The impressive render flying sequences play a bit like Virgin's Chaos Control.
Cyberia features 'synthetic characters' – fully computer-generated actors, and seems to follow the current vogue for interactive movie billing. The soundtrack is heavily hyped, coming from synth guru Thomas Dolby's Headspace label.
It should all come together on a single CD some time around crimble.

DO THE MATH

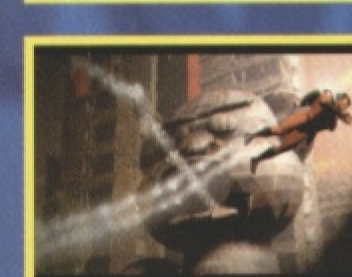
NEW GAME BY INTERPLAY
FORMAT SATURN

What is it with the future? Interplay's apocalyptic futuro-thriller Aftermath treads the well-worn theme of Global technowar, with huge weapons threatening city states (Seatac in this case). And we thought nuclear weapons in this century were effective enough.
Perhaps, but radiation sickness is no fun next to 12 stages of platforming across 3-D environments, texture-mapping, light-sourcing and all the gubbins of a self-respecting Saturn project.
Like many times before, you're a secret agent (Vic, by name) and as well as taking on the giant robot suits of the bad guys, there's (gasp) a traitor in your midst. Want to know more? Aftermath is due as soon as December, and we'll be taking a look before that.





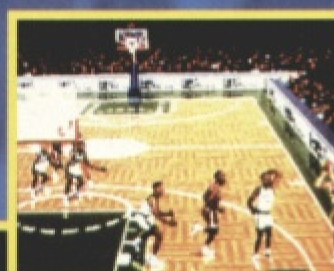




SLAM DUNK

NEWS BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
FORMAT SATURN

Crystal Dynamics are remixing their 3DO hit Slam 'n' Jam '95 for the Saturn. The game is currently awaiting big name sponsorship, and is thus being developed under the title 3-D Basketball. It makes its debut this winter and boasts full-on, five-on-five play gameplay in a 3-D televisual presentation. Despite the players' size (they take up roughly half the screen) they apparently move like greased lightning. Or so distributors BMG tell us. The whole affair comes complete with a commentary by CNN's Van Earl Wright.

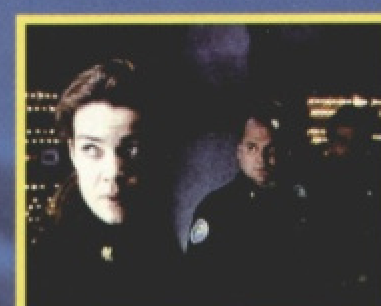


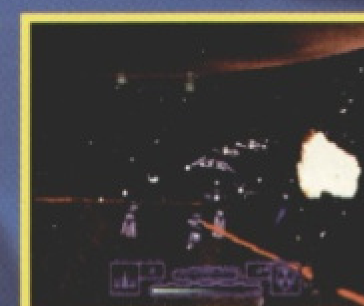


DARK SIDE OF THE SUN

NEWS BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
FORMAT SATURN

Crystal Dynamics, the first company to develop and publish a 32bit game for a home console way back in 1993, have recently shifted their attention away from the 3DO to the Saturn. A brace of forthcoming titles from the team, whose work is distributed by record giants BMG, includes Solar Eclipse – the first game of its type for the format to feature full motion video. Solar Eclipse stars Babylon 5's Claudia Christian and promises a high speed 3-D texture-mapped race against time to knockout a a malfunctioning master computer. The computer, named the Grid, has come round to thinking you're its enemy and chucks everything it can at you. Still, you've got 40 minutes of FMV Claudia to help you on the way so that's alright then. Solar Eclipse is released on the Saturn this winter, a good three months ahead of the Playstation version.





BUGSY BOTHER

NEWS BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
FORMAT SATURN

Another Crystal Dynamics 3DO game which is being enhanced for the Saturn is the bash 'n' chaser Off-World Interceptor. You take control of 4-wheel drive buggy and race across deserts, rivers and twisting mountain roads in six different alien world scenarios. The two-player option presents a split screen mode. Off World Interceptor Extreme (as the game is being retitled) has a number of souped up features include a new trading element where you hunt down fugitives and terrorists for cash rewards, which you can then use to equip your vehicle with weapons and extra gadgets. Obstacles on your way include competitive vehicles, rolling boulders and land mines. Off World Interceptor Extreme hits the road this winter.

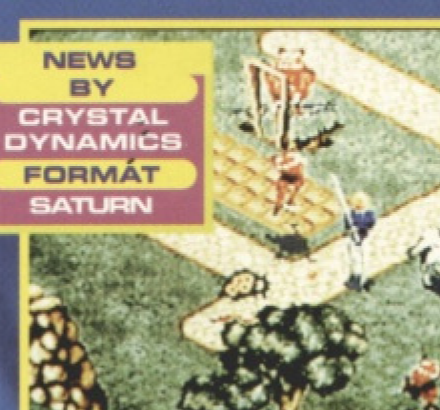




MARAUDING HORDLINGS

NEWS BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
FORMÁT SATURN

Hordlings – aggressive trolls with ferocious appetites – devour anything and anyone in their path. People, cows, trees, houses...nothing can resist the stampeding hordes. Nothing except you, that is, in this Saturn title from Crystal Dynamics, who have adapted the game from the original 3DO version, enriching it with 35 minutes of full motion video along the way. The footage was directed by Robert Weaver and stars Kirk Cameron and Michael (Robocop, Total Recall) Gregory. We'll be sharpening our broadsword and tackling the toothsome terrors in our review next issue. Stay tuned...



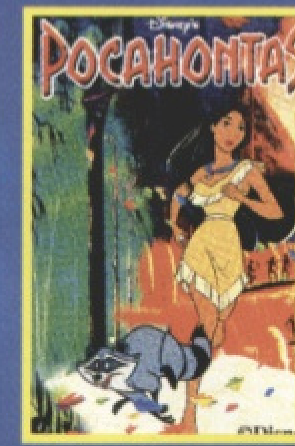


YOU DON'T SAY...

I have to be sooo quick this month — Claire is screaming for copy. Anyway, the story we broke at E3 about Sega getting into M2 seems to be true, and sooner than you think, why else would EA's Saturn development have become so muted? Virgin US offered a number of enticing closed doors, behind which several projects are taking shape. Propoganda for one, a racing game that reputedly redefines racing games. Quite warped too by all accounts. They even have an 'on air' red light outside. Earthworm Jim 2 is being done on Saturn, but not by Shiny. They've hired a San Diego outfit called Screaming Pink to do the Saturn. And Shiny? Well, with Interplay's backing, rumours of a Shiny 3-D game are pretty strong. US Gold are slipping their Olympic games back somewhat, which is a pity as the multi-event game looks cool. Finally Core have come up with Scottish Open on 32X again — looking good; Thunderhawk 2 looks okay and plays better, and Core's distant project Tomb Raider is set to be a real stunner. 'Til next month, toodle pip.

INDIAN WINTER

NEW GAME BY DISNEY
FORMAT MEGADRIVE



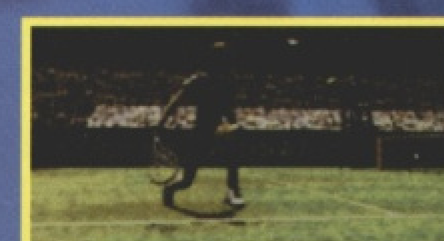
Disney are stepping in with a Megadrive version of their new film Pocohontas. Once again it's gone down well in the States, and should fill theatres here from October. MEAN MACHINES is assured the exclusive review of Pocohontas, which is a platform game centred on the Indian princess character whose love for an English colonial prevents a war between the two peoples. Basically tasty birds in jumping action ahoy.

NEW BALLS PLEASE

NEW GAME BY IMAGINEER
FORMAT SATURN

After the import delights of Virtual Volleyball, Imagineer give us a sports sim with a broader appeal. Virtual Tennis is the first mooted version of a popular genre of video game for the Saturn. It uses the same virtual technology behind volleyball, but with more sophisticated visuals and clearer presentation. We shall watch this one with interest.





ENTRY FORM

Yes, my scratchcard reveals the number 23,643

NAME:..........................
ADDRESS:....................
....
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POSTCODE:...................

SIGNED BY PARENT IF APPLICABLE:...............
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PRIMAL COMPO

This is the update for last month's Primal Rage compo, where the prize, if you remember, was a coin-op to takeaway. To enter, you have bought a copy of Primal Rage from Dixons and should be in possession of a scratchcard. Scratch now and see if your card matches this number:

23,642

It is? Fantastic, you're through to the next round of the competition. Now you must complete the entry form below, and send it with your scratch card to the following address:

PRIMAL RAGE COMPO, MARKETING DEPT, EMAP IMAGES, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU

The winning coupon will then be drawn from all the entries at random. The runners up are pretty lucky too, getting a Time Warner goodie bag. All winners will be notified by post by November 30th. Normal compo rules apply. No purchase is necessary: write to the given address and a card will be scratched on your behalf.

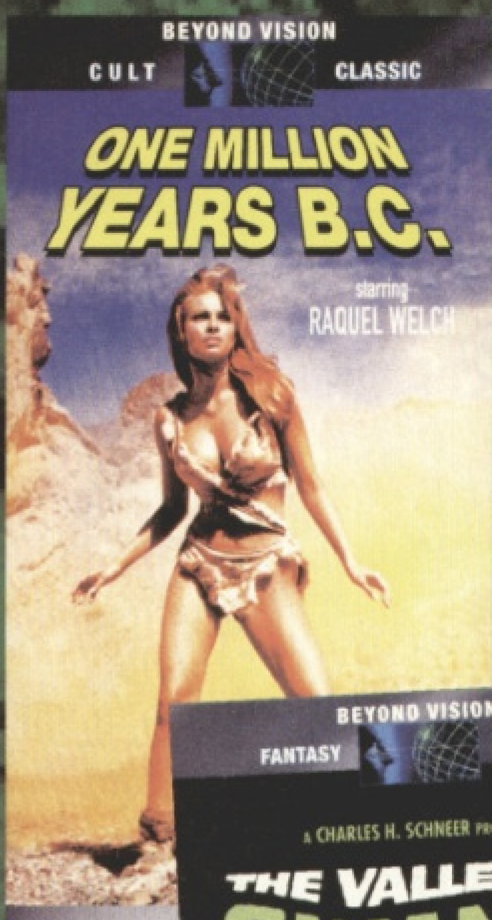



SHARPEN YOUR MIND
AS WELL
AS YOUR SWORD.
SEGA the GAME IS NEVER Over.
Light Crusader
MEGA DRIVE
Hours of awesome role-playing and beat 'em up gameplay. Meet the challenge or meet your Maker.
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DINO FRENZY!



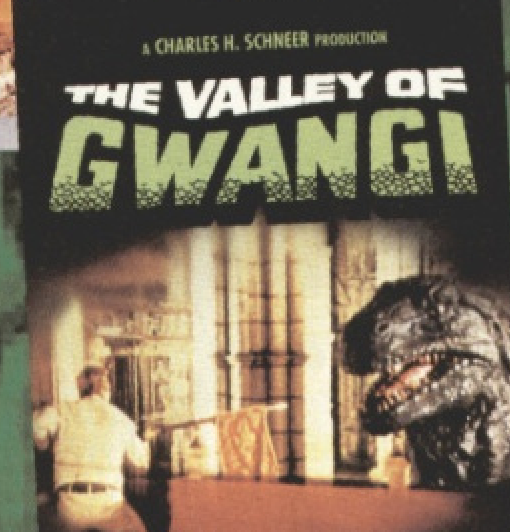
Long before Primal Rage and Jurassic Park, prehistoric Earth was a very different place. None of your top flight computer generated graphics and animatronic special effects here, oh no.
However, filmmakers of years gone by compensated in other ways. Who needs computer generated graphics when you've got Raquel Welch in a furry bikini? And who needs Dickie Attenborough when you can get Laurence Olivier to play Zeus?
Those generous chaps at Warner Brothers have once more failed to notice that a crack MEAN MACHINES squad have grabbed another bucketful of top new titles to give away in our latest competition. This month's freebies are a classic clutch of dinosaur movies from special effects master Ray Harryhausen. We have five sets of One Million Years BC, Valley of the Gwangi and Clash of the Titans – all titles released by Warner Brothers' Beyond Vision label on October 30 – to give away.
One Million Years BC is Hammer's classic dinosaur fantasy, and the film that launched Raquel Welch as a star. Aside from anything else it's worth watching for the giant turtle and the legendary bikini.
Valley of the Gwangi takes place in Mexico's Forbidden valley, and concerns a group of adventurers who hunt down a living dinosaur which breaks out and takes its revenge.
Laurence Olivier and Ursula Andress star in the 1981 epic Clash of the Titans. Based on centuries-old Greek and Nordic legends, the film depicts the heroic adventures of Zeus and his quest for the beautiful Andromeda. Dino highlights include a winged horse and various other Harryhausen beasties.

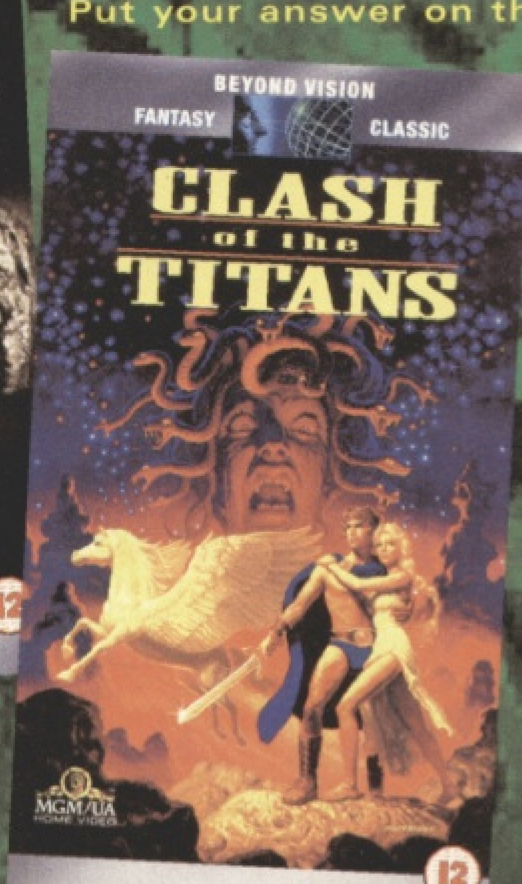


We've got 5 sets of the One Million Years BC, Valley of the Gwangi and Clash of the Titans to unleash – to be in with a chance of owning a set simply tell us the answer to this dead simple question...

Which world-famous director made Jurassic Park?

Put your answer on the back of a postcard or sealed down envelope and send it to:





ROAR MEAT COMPO,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
EMAP IMAGES,
30-32 FARRINGDON LANE,
LONDON
EC1R 3AU

You must be aged 12 or over to enter.

BEYOND VISION
FANTASY CLASSIC



REVE
OF
TOO

They're all around us. If we are not vigilant they may try to take over. The 'Toons. If anyone thought the next generation consoles would mean no more cutesy games with fluffy, smart-mouthed characters and comedy death, they must be having second thoughts. The Saturn is more than capable of tinkly tunes and waddling sprites.
This month's cover toons, Cool Spot and Rayman, are up there with the best of them. But not all who try to enter the Toon Hall of Fame succeed. Does anyone remember Rolo to the Rescue? Bubsy the Bobcat now seems a distant Accolade nightmare...and Spirou? Well, the name alone sounds like projectile vomiting.
To defy the odds and create a character and game worth celebrating, you have to follow our simple rules of creating a cute game:

	THE GAME	BEDTIME STORY	FUR FACTOR
COOL SPOT	Adventures in tooth-rotting drink land (he's the US sponsor of 7-Up).	As animated acne, you have fallen into 'Virtual Hollywood', whatever that is.	None. Smooth round and squeezable.
RAYMAN	Weird Froggie coders enter the magic forest.	All the world's mystical turnips have been stolen by a man in a cape.	Despite a promising mop top, Ray has a disturbing lack of actual limb bits.
SONIC	In 'Ye olde review scores arm-twisting adventure'.	Each episode is a continuing battle between a vaguely Germanic lard-ass.	Probably infested with insects, along with his mates.
BUG!	A voyage through joystick-fiddling and perspective guessing.	More barely-relevent Hollywood story bumf, with Bug as an 'actor'.	Slimy, and a disturbing shade of green.
BUBSY BOBCAT	A desperate mission to save a software house by cuddlesome means.	Extremely sad 'aliens/cheesy/wool' plot combo.	Yes, but as appeal-ing as a roadkill. Don't choke on this furball.
EARTH-WORM JIM'	Cows.	Cows. A pushy princess. A crow in a skin-tight space suit. Cows.	Caterpillar with a skinhead.
ZOOL	The PC's answer to the console platformer comes home to roost.	Something to explain you running across sweetie walking sticks.	A bloated licqourice allsort in a ski mask.



ENGE THE ONS

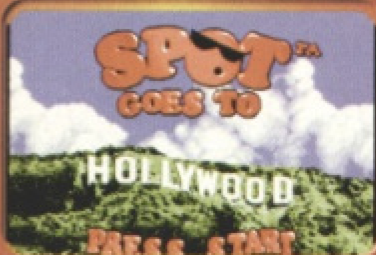
1. Be from Virgin or Konami. Otherwise don't bother trying.
2. Make it a platform game. Always a platform game.
3. Include fruit.

General rule 1: All cute platform games use fruit for energy restorers – 'grown up' games use chicken drumsticks.

4. Use hundreds of sprites of animation. Most of this should be used for the 'little funny things' the character does when you can't be bothered using the joystick, like picking his nose (8 frames) or assembling a chemical toilet and having a dump (80 frames).
5. Spend half your memory quota on amazing quips sampled as speech. Use a funny American actor. It is obligatory to say 'that's gotta hurt' somewhere in the game.
6. Use all remaining memory doing something silly with the Sega logo.
7. Include cows (applies to Shiny Entertainment only).



FLUFFED LINES	LOVE ABILITY	ENCORES?
Assorted warblings.	Not that popular here, but no boil on the arse of humanity either.	However hard you try to disguise him, he keeps coming back.
He giggles, but is otherwise Fench and dumb.	Treat him with compassion, as he'll probably end up in a veal crate.	Who knows?
Communicates through sign language.	Getting too old to hanging out with the kids — look at Micheal Jackson.	The Sean Connery of video games will go on until he drops.
Purveyor of 30 MB worth of ghastly Americanisms.	Talk of Bug! and I reach for my RAID.	Yeah, the first game won't keep him in fresh turds forever.
The original verbal skitterjock. No end of 'comedy quips'	A mangy moggy even a mother would find hard to love.	Two was more than enough.
A man of few words, amd most of them are 'cool'.	One of your classmates looks like him and do you hang out with him?	The comic, the toy, the Saturday Morning cartoon...
He finds it hard enough to walk in a straight line, let alone employ his 'rapier wit'.	About as welcome as root canal surgery from sweetie cigarettes.	I don't think so, really, do you?



BY EUROCOM

RELEASE OCTOBER

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE SHOOT 'EM UP

1 PLAYERS

24 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
1-6

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
AWKWARD

ORIGIN

Cool Spot returns in an isometric adventure that plays like a 'greatest hits' of game styles.

GAME AIM

Collect the spots hidden in the Hollywood movie studios.

BEAT THIS

Pumpkin Castle on Normal setting.



Since the small red spot on the 7-Up bottle jumped into his own game a few years ago he's made quite an impression. In a short space of time, Cool Spot earned a deserved reputation as one of the Megadrive's premier platform/shoot 'em ups. All over the country people were relishing reducing seaside wildlife to their boxer shorts and navigating Spot across the toy train from hell. In short, Cool Spot was essential. All of which makes Eurocom's decision to throw the original game's format out the window all the more brave.

In Spot Goes To Hollywood, gone are the cutesy seaside backdrops. Gone are the endless platforms, visible and invisible. In fact, gone is the whole flat 2-D caboodle. Rather than an embellishment or even an extension of the original, Spot Goes To Hollywood is a brand new game which simply happens to star the little red guy. And it takes him, and the whole genre of cute games, to new heights.

Since we last saw him, Spot's fame has gone to his, er, head. The shades are now an essential accessory to prevent him being recognised, and the excitement of the surf is no longer so alluring. Making a date with destiny, Spot journeys to Tinseltown in search of the film that will launch him as a truly international star. Arriving at the film lot, Spot discovers that old habits die hard and he feels strangely compelled to collect whatever he can (but principally other spots) while he strolls through studios shooting pirate films, horror movies and what seems to be the latest Indiana Jones picture. Wandering through fully isometric scenarios, Spot's quest is hampered by everything from homicidal crustations to dribbling aliens. Forget everything you thought you knew about Spot – this is really cool...

TAKE YOUR PICK

Each of Spot Goes To Hollywood's four levels is prefixed by a menu screen offering you the chance to take each of the sub-levels in the order of your choice. As each sub-level is completed it appears 'coloured in' – when all sub-levels are coloured in the level is complete.

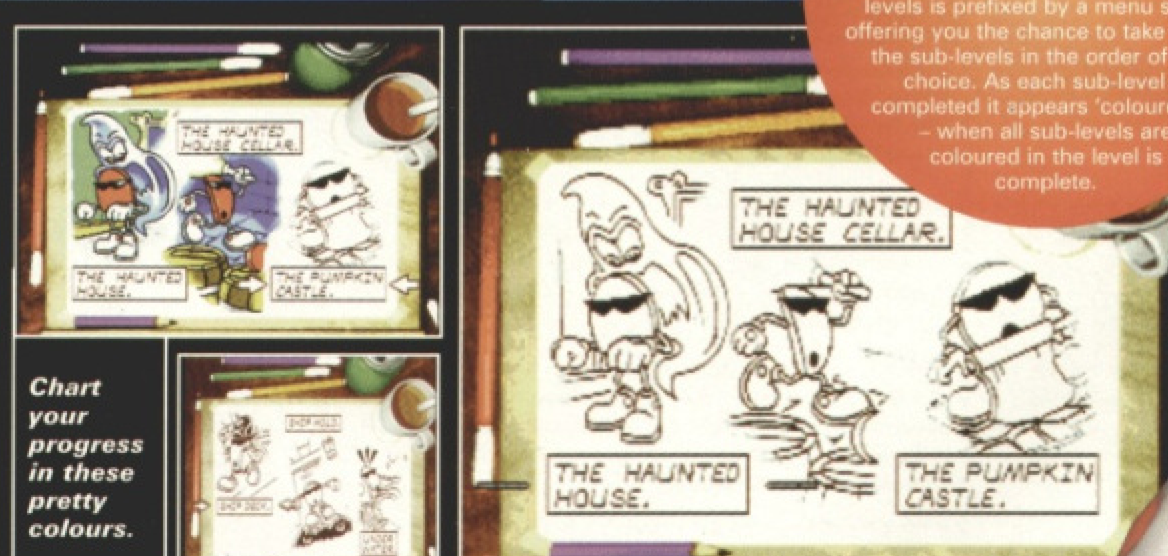


Chart your progress in these pretty colours.

SHIP HOLD

Below deck lies a world of rotting wood and shark-infested puddles. Balance Spot on narrow walkways and propel him from precariously splintered planks to gain access to areas you want to pillage.

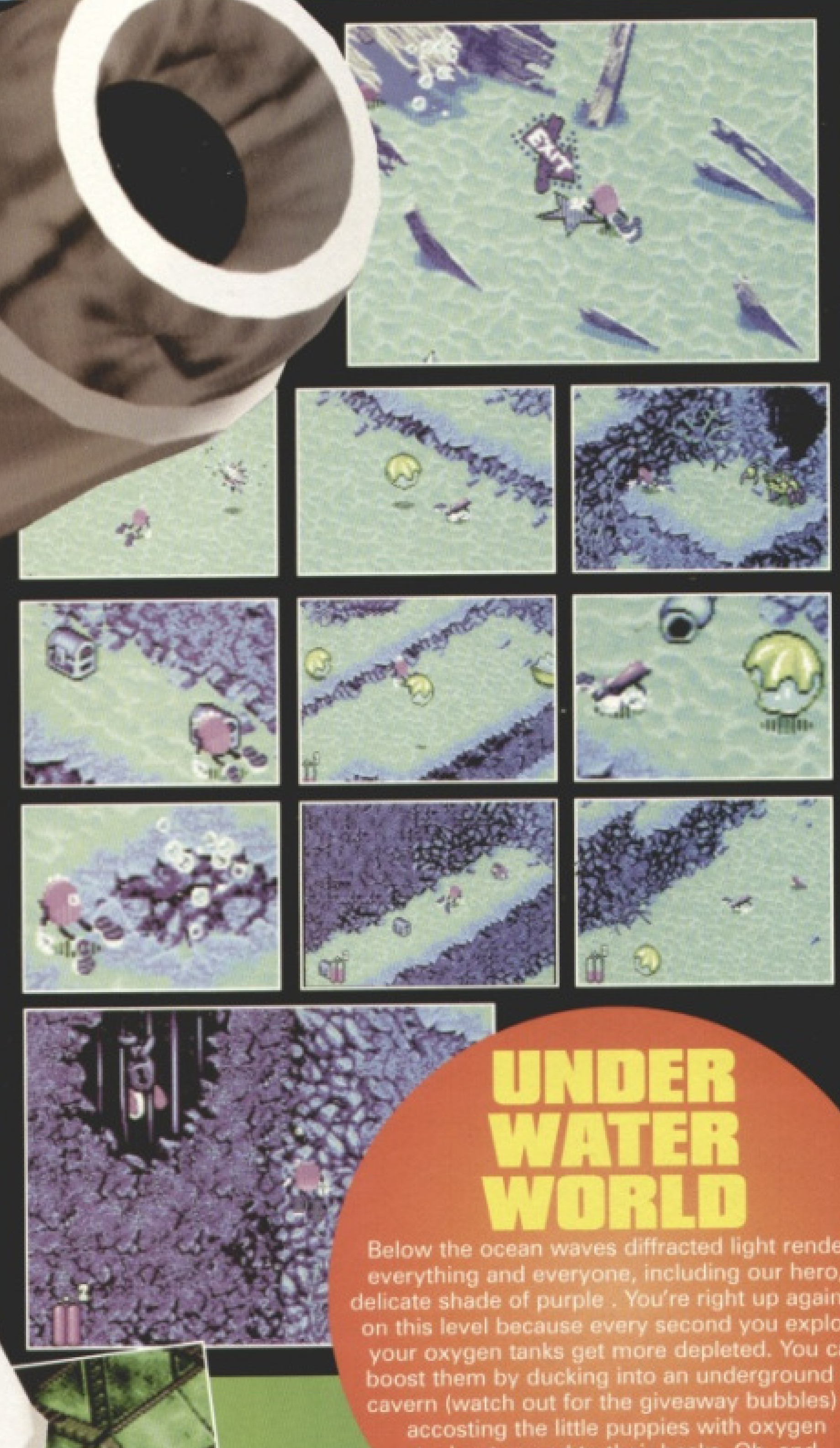


Watch out for the shifty sharks and clutching crabs below deck. Oo er!



SHIP DECK

Level 1 kicks off with a spirited adventure aboard a pirate ship. Jolly Rogers can be collected for extra points, while loose cannons prove dangerous at both ends. Barrels take on a rubbery quality all of their own, and can be useful for gaining that extra bit of bounce when aiming for jewels that are just out of reach. The most dangerous foes here are the death-dealing crabs that stand guard on flights of staircases.

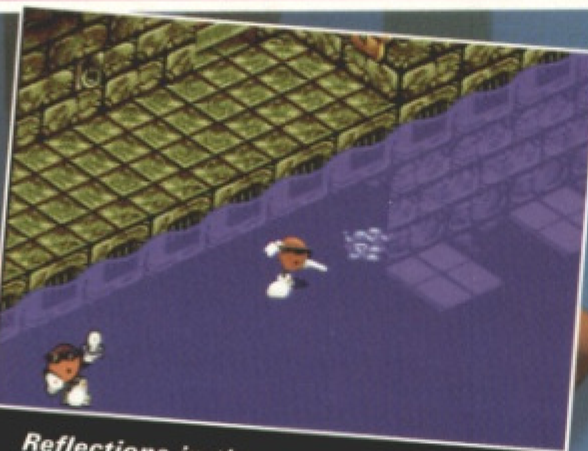


UNDER WATER WORLD

Below the ocean waves diffracted light renders everything and everyone, including our hero, a delicate shade of purple . You're right up against it on this level because every second you explore, your oxygen tanks get more depleted. You can boost them by ducking into an underground air cavern (watch out for the giveaway bubbles) or accosting the little puppies with oxygen tanks strapped to their backs. Oh, and watch out for the killer clams...

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

Giant spiders, trap doors and sleepwalking skeletons are amongst the nasties Spot has to contend with as the second level begins. If things get uncomfortable don't forget that the haunted house's greatest cliche – the hinged bookshelf hiding a secret passage – can come in very handy for sidestepping trouble. A cryptic puzzle involving rearranging three ceramic vases into a certain position is also worth finding – success leads to a secret passage behind a loose plank of wood.



Reflections in the water offer a clue to the location of invisible platforms overhead.









PUMPKIN CASTLE

The Scooby Doo experience continues with a trip to Pumpkin Castle, so named because once there you run the risk of being squashed flat by giant bouncing pumpkins. Obvious really. This is another puzzle-orientated level, with some complex mechanisms embedded in the floor which must be set in the right order and some wall-mounted platforms which vanish a split second after you've jumped on them. All very annoying. The added menace of some murderous axe-wielding knights keep things action-packed while you're trying to work out how to walk up a wall of ever-vanishing platforms that look like giant







SPOOKY CELLAR

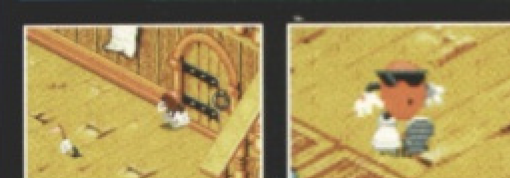
The second level's puzzle-filled flavour continues as you descend into the wine cellar. This is perhaps the most taxing section in Spot Goes To Hollywood. While the level itself is actually quite small, success relies upon finding ways to open various doors and collect a number of keys.

Watch the water if you're unsure of where to go next – invisible platforms still leave a reflection...

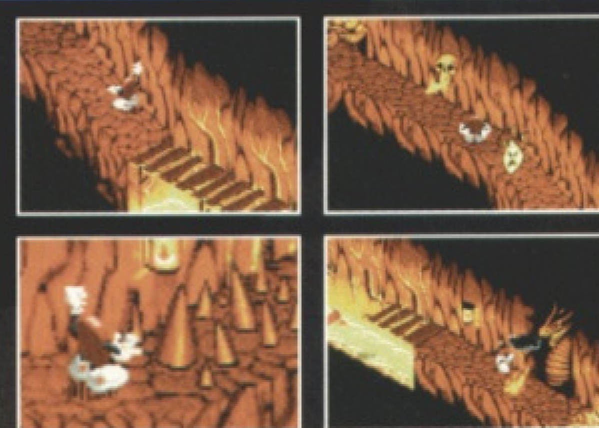
FLY THE FLAG

If you are reluctant to go back to the beginning of your sub-level when you cop it, make sure you find the spots waving flags through gaps in walls and knot-holes in the floor. Once marked, these become your restart points.



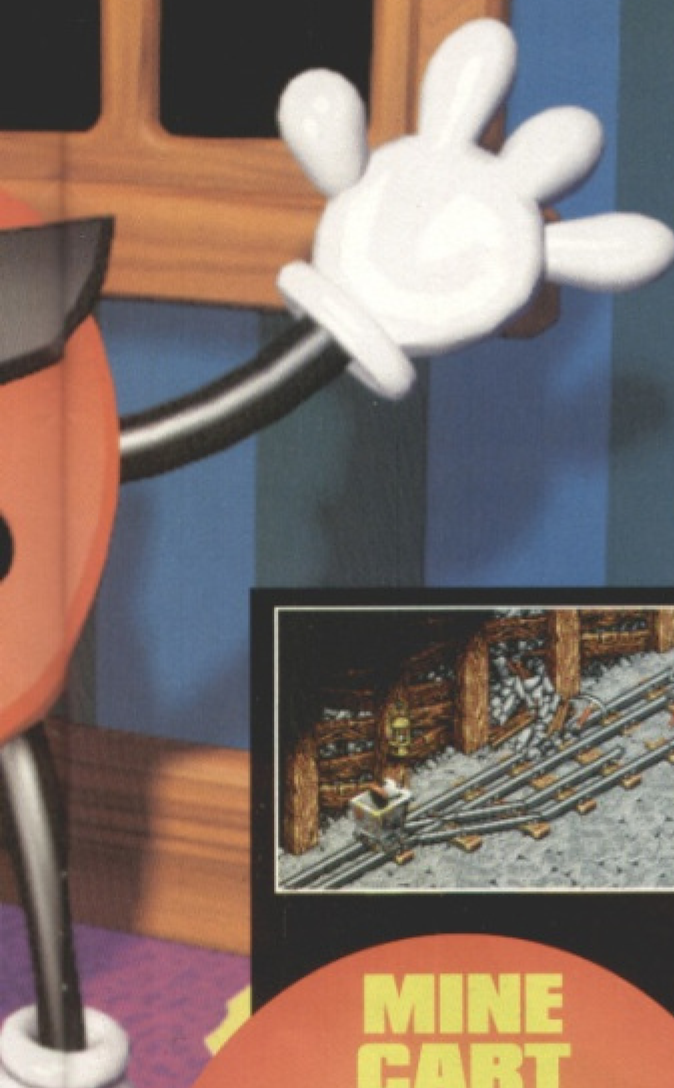


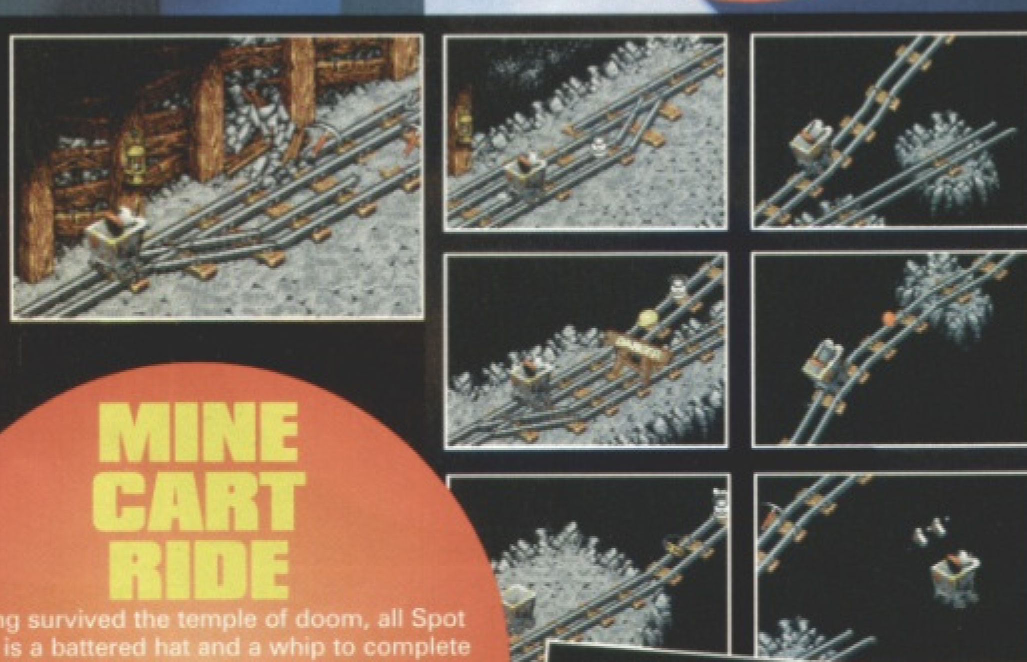
Watch out for little spotty friends who wave at you through holes in the floors and walls.



UNDER THE TEMPLE

Things hot up downstairs, as you leap the lava pits and duck the flame spirits to avoid a roasting. Fall in and there's no climbing out...







MINE CART RIDE

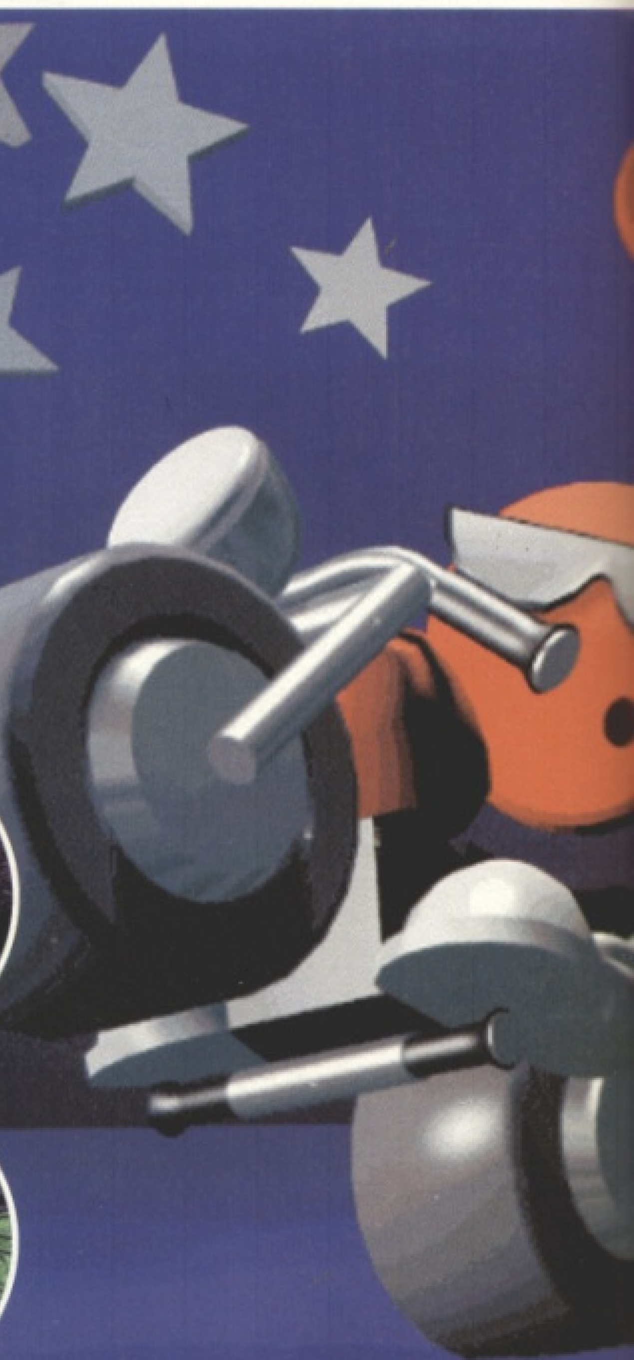
Having survived the temple of doom, all Spot needs is a battered hat and a whip to complete the Indiana Jones experience on the mine cart level. After the more relaxed pace of earlier levels, the cracking speed of this section comes as something of a jolt. There's nothing you can do except tilt your cart from one side to the other and jump if things get hairy. Watch the points and danger signs, then cling on for dear life.





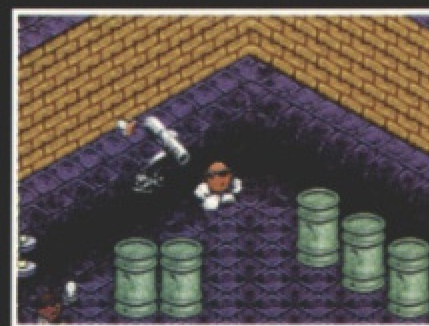
THE TEMPLE

Everything gets very Indiana Jonesish on the third level. The action opens in an Aztec scenario where you're being being chased by pink-bottomed monkeys with spears. Watch out for their friends, who delight in throwing blue coconuts at you from great heights.

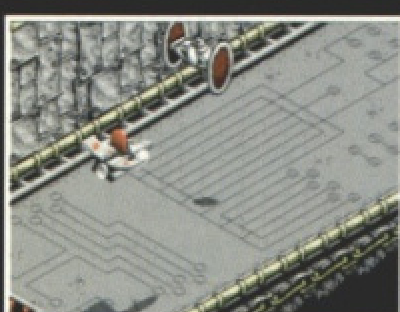


POST-NUCLEAR WORLD

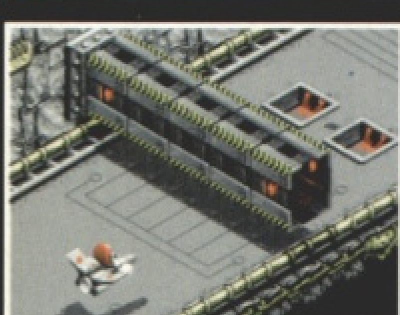
Spot continues his journey through the backlots of some major blockbusters with a visit to the nightmarish future. Judgement day approaches as Spot's life is threatened by a grey spot who intends terminating him with a huge rocket launcher. Watch out for land mines on your excellent adventure.



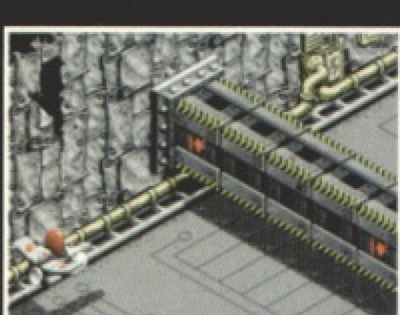


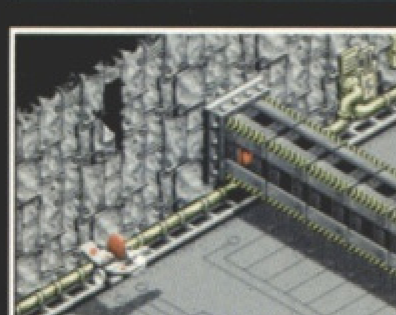


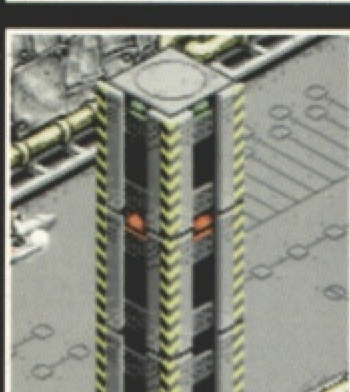






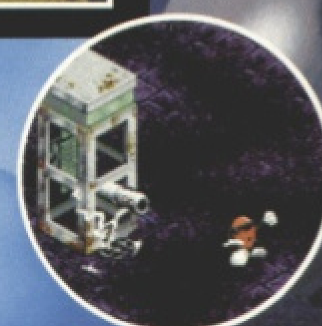






SPACE BATTLE

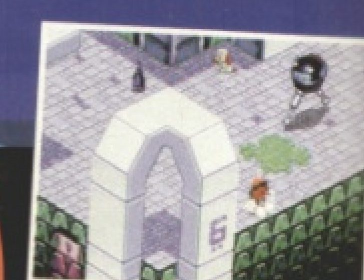
Spot is launched to the stars as his sci-fi experiences take him to a giant space station. Flying through a deep surface trench, with some fighters in hot pursuit, the ships are tied together. Strike back at the evil empire if you can, but your mission here is simply to survive.





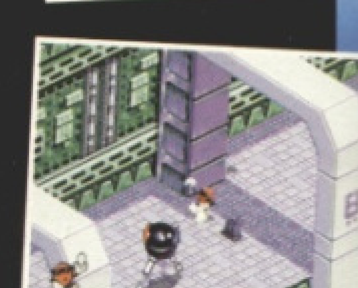
THE SPACE STATION

Small service droids bug you and floating robots make your life very difficult as you move up and down the lifts in the space station, searching for spots. The alien creatures which plague you later on make their first appearance in this level.



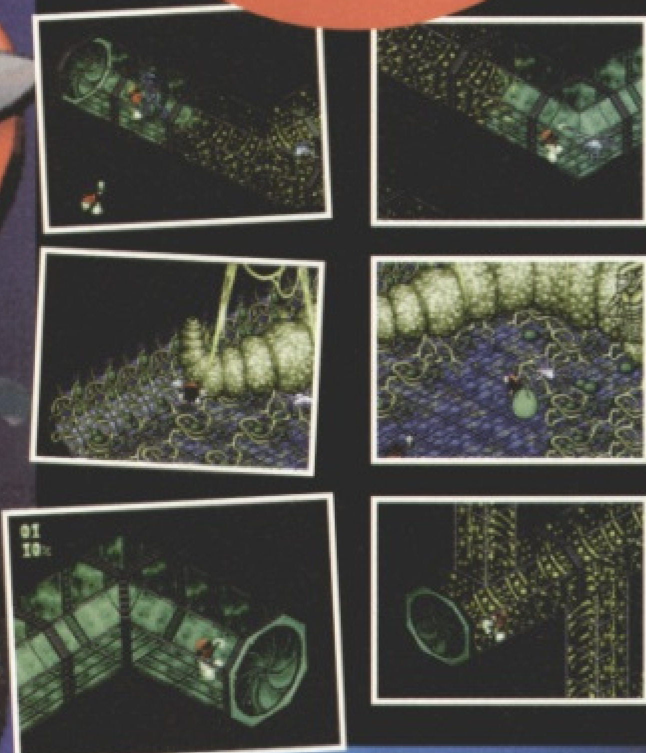


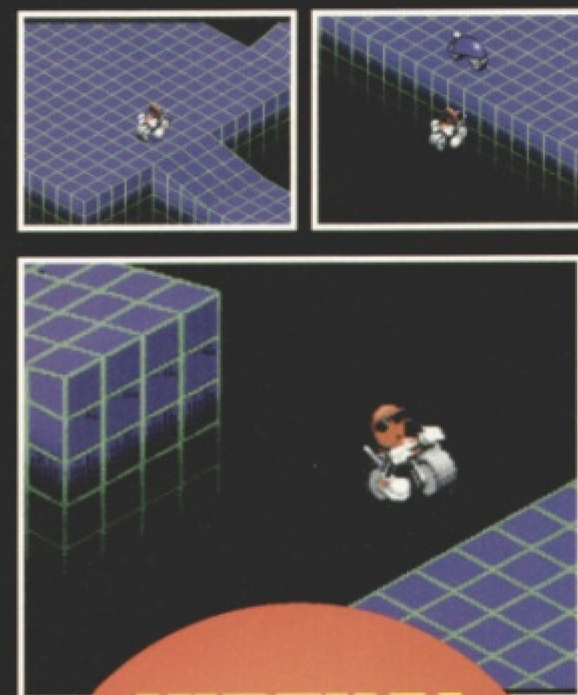




THE COMPLEX

The game rounds off with a terrifying trip through an abandoned space craft and a visit to the alien queen's lair. No-one can hear your scream as you're pursued by fast-moving octopoid creatures and scuttling full-grown aliens down dank corridors and tight service tunnels. If you find yourself swallowed up by one or more of the small aliens then it's relatively simply to blast your way through them in a splash of green blood. The adult aliens are a bit more difficult to kill.





VIRTUAL WORLD

Level four climaxes with a nightmarish trip around the circuits of a giant computer. Spot sits astride a powerful motorcycle which he can rev up and pull wheelies on while he's being chased by the persistent blue motorcycle. Watch for energy barrier walls and deep chasms. Crossing them Evel Knievel style is the only way...

COMMENT



GUS

When Marcus and I first went to see Spot, we couldn't quite believe what it looked like, or the task that Eurocom had set itself. They've put together a little gem that cheekily rivals Virgin Inc.'s Saturn work-still-in-progress. Cool Spot was always one of my favourite platformers, because of the character, the control, the graphics and the gameplay. True, this game takes the character and remoulds most of the rest, but Virgin have been smart enough to see that any more 16bit 2-D platforming wasn't what the crowd were calling for. What they have is an exquisite isometric world for Spot to walk through, with graphics of crunchy-crispness on every level and a wonderfully animated Spot. They also have a game of quite unusual diversity — from the gentle foothills of the Pirate section, to the puzzling tendencies of the Horror section, through to the wilder sections for more accomplished gamers. One thing to bear in mind is that Cool Spot caters for the full gamut of gaming skills, and without displaying intolerance to the needs for broad-based gaming, real game heads should tread more carefully. Mere mortals should start queuing down the Megastore.

COMMENT



MARCUS

This stretches the Megadrive yet further, and takes one of gaming's real characters into whole new territories. It would have been relatively easy to crank out more of the same – the Cool Spot name would have guaranteed a certain amount of sales – but Eurocom have clearly laboured over a treat of a game that rolls a multitude of influences into one while retaining the cheeky character of the original. This has an excellent blend of shooting, balancing and lateral puzzling which makes it a playing gaming experience for the dedicated all-rounder. The only thing that lets this down is the isometric viewpoint which occasionally makes it tricky to judge true distance. In a fault common to many games of this type you can find yourself seriously misjudging jumps, or even not spotting some sections, because of the awkward angles. And Spot was never the easiest character to manoeuvre, which doesn't help matters. This aside though, you can't help but admire the sheer breadth of vision that went into this radical departure from Cool Spot. This is a more than worthy successor to a great original game, and deserves even greater accolades.

GRAPHICS 94

▲A multitude of different scenarios in excellent detail – they lend the game a Crystal Maze flavour.

ANIMATION 91

▲Spot remains almost as much fun to watch as he is to play.

MUSIC 87

▲Excellent theme tune and 'sounds like' themes for each different movie scenario.

EFFECTS 85

▲Spot's much unchanged, but everything else is loud and furious.

PLAYABILITY 89

▲A game you want to explore, as well as tackle.
▼The isometric viewpoints can be off-putting on some levels.

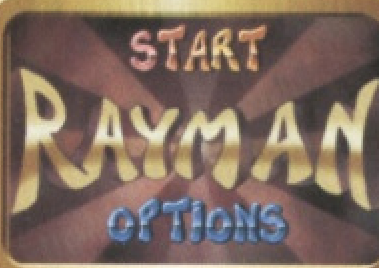
LASTABILITY 90

▲The wide variety of scenarios add to the intrigue.
▼It's perhaps not challenging enough for some players.

OVERALL

An endearing, engaging and truly broad sequel. Highly recommended.

91



BY UBI-SOFT

RELEASE NOVEMBER

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE PLATFORM

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
5

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
FAB

ORIGIN

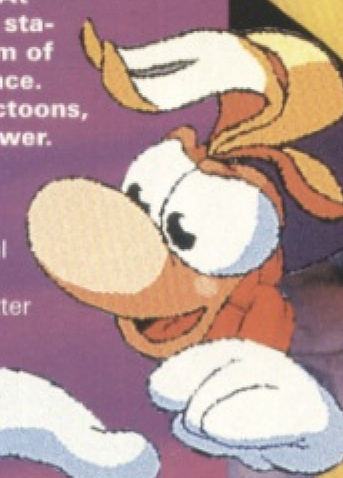
Rayman is Ubi-Soft's first platform hero. The game uses a Mario-esque slant on gameplay.

GAME AIM

Free all the Electoons imprisoned by Dark Man located on over 70 platform stages.

BEAT THIS

Day One: 5%



Rayman's world is a place quite different from ours. It's physics are a mix of quantums and cutesy-pie: magnetic forces and dark forces. At the heart of the world's stability is the great Protoon, an atom of good that holds all things in balance. Around this swarm the happy electoons, attracted by Protoon's strange power.

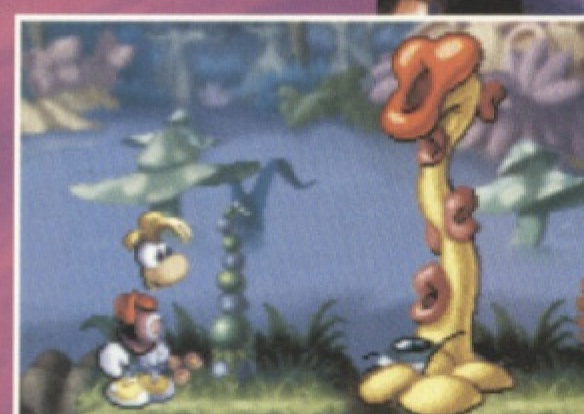
All fine until one day the evil Mr. Dark launches a raid on the place of the Protoon and steals it away. Betilla, the Protoon's magica guard is not powerful enough to prevent him. Without the Protoon's attraction, the electoons scatter across the globe.

What possible use could Darkman have for the Protoon?

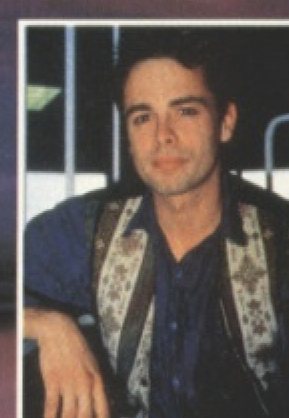
In the absence of its power, stange creatures begin to congregate in nature, capturing the electoons.

Even someone as laid back as Rayman can't ignore what's going on, with the odd types on the prowl. As soon as he makes contact with Betilla, he decides to go on a quest to free the electoons, and ultimately snatch back the Protoon.

One snag is that he can't do very much. Rayman isn't much of a hero, well not in the beginning at least. Jumping and legging it are about the height of his powers. However, Betilla will reward his courage and perseverance by adding skills to his repertoire as they are needed. And that they will be, with 70 areas of the kingdom to explore.



RAY MAN: BRAIN CHILD



The home of the croissant, twirly moustache and tickler is the homeland of Rayman. Rayman is French, and therefore instantly hateful to the English. His gallic charm is the work of Michael Ancel, at the Ubi studios in Paris. His previous hits include Pick 'n' Pile. Rayman's animation was achieved using traditional hand traced methods, which explains the 'Disney-esque' feel.



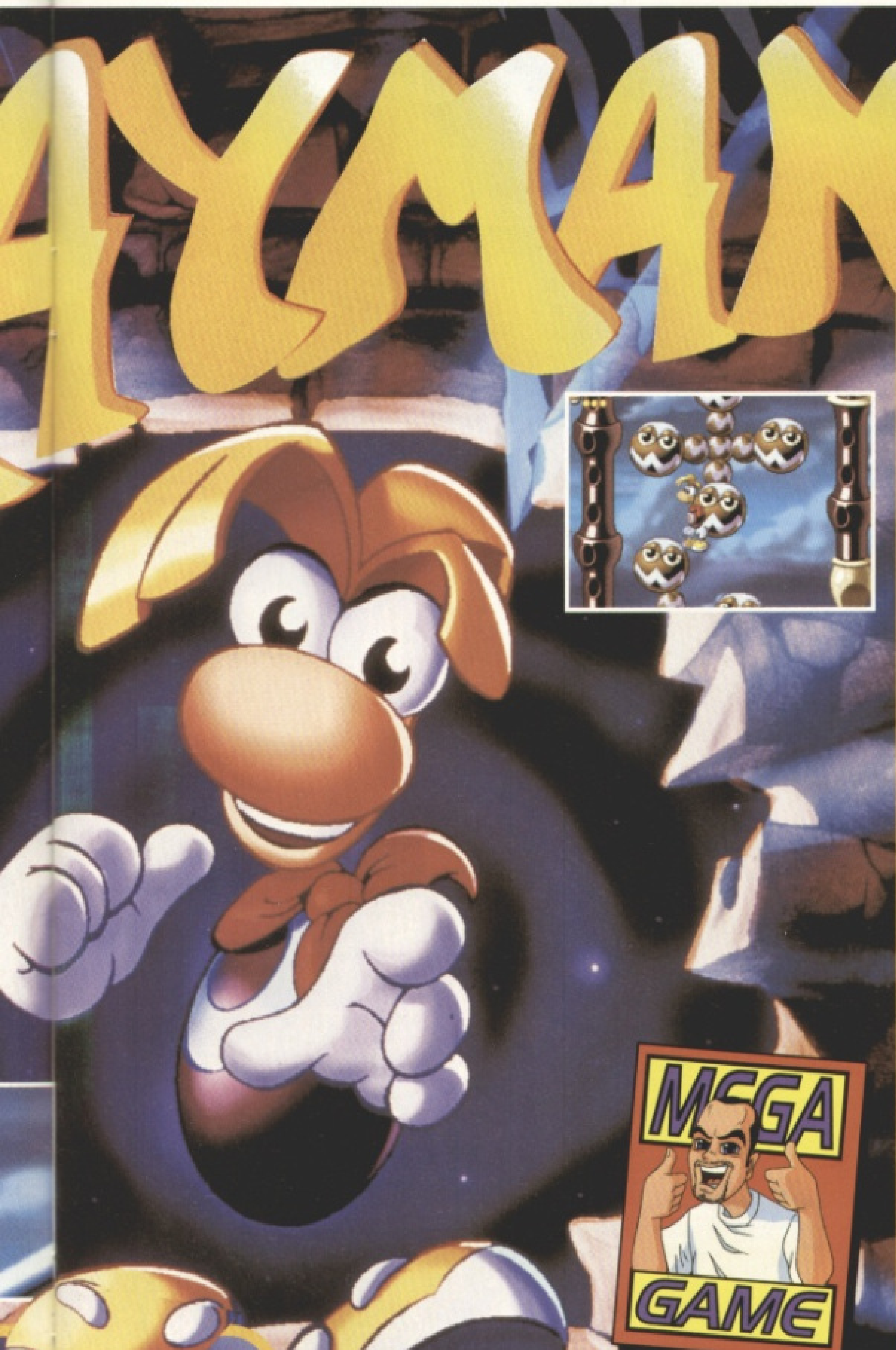


NAME THAT TOON

Each stage has six electoon cages, which Rayman may destroy. The freed electoons gambol off, giggling. Some of these prisons are easy to spot, some visible but out of the way, and yet more only materialise when Rayman passes a certain, spot, so backtracking is essential. Only when all medallions, denoting the electoon cages, are filled is the game completed. Indeed, the last massive level is only penetrable with the help of ALL the electoons.









FISTS OF FUN

Rayman's one useful ally is Betilla the fairy. Although the gaily-clad pixie is not powerful enough to take on Darkman herself, she turns up to endow Rayman with new powers, zapped onto the symbol on his tunic. These powers allow him to explore areas previously out of reach, and thus find more Electoons. The game's twist is that levels you have completed often are worth more exploration with the benefit of new powers:

PUNCH

The first and most basic power. Rayman's spooky disembodied hands pack a punch that sees off most Darkmen minions. Hold down the button to increase the range of each thrust.



GRAB

This precarious power allows Rayman to grasp the edges of platforms. It adds some leeway for error when jumping, and later using this as a tactic becomes essential.



CHOPPER

Rayman's tousled mop is transformed into a set of chopper blades. With any jump, in fact, Rayman can glide to earth sedately, vastly increasing his jump range. Some levels give his helicopter option control to rise as well.



SWING

The many hanging rings throughout the game reveal their purpose when Betilla bestows the swing power. Rayman is enabled to hang and build up an arcing path.



RUN

Only when well into the game does this most basic of functions become available, giving variation in jump length and speed.





TOP HAT AND TALES

The odd dwarf magician awaits Rayman in several secluded corners, and he expects the blue globes as payment for a brief soiree in the magical bonus levels. These are simply a chance to gain extra lives by grabbing the requires amount of objects in a set time. For the meagre reward they offer, they're fiendishly difficult. You can return to the magicians as many times as you choose.







SEEDS OF LOVE

When Rayman strays into the swamps of forgetfulness, a strange unclothed forest dweller, Tarzyan, is his salvation. Tarzy gives him magical seeds, which grow instantly when planted. Suddenly, a flash flood forces Rayman to seek higher ground, and the seeds are his only hope...







BUM NOTES

Rayman's adventures in the tuneful environs of bandland are less than harmonius. As well as the instrumental antics, the platforms are made up of slippery staves and musical bumps. With growing confidence you can surf through each level at high speed: do me a quaver!



DRUMSTICK

No chickening out, you have to go under, and risk a flattening.



SNARE DRUM

Why a snare drum wears a snorkelling mask is anybody's business, but he appears behind you, as a bunk-up to higher ground.



BUGLES

A bugle blast is a potent propellant. One treacherous sequence involves a whole complement and some pixel-perfect zig-zagging.



CYMBALS

Rayman has a brief clash with this pair on his way out the level.

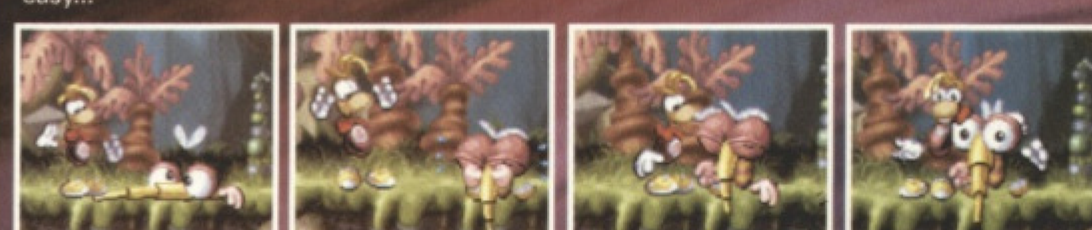


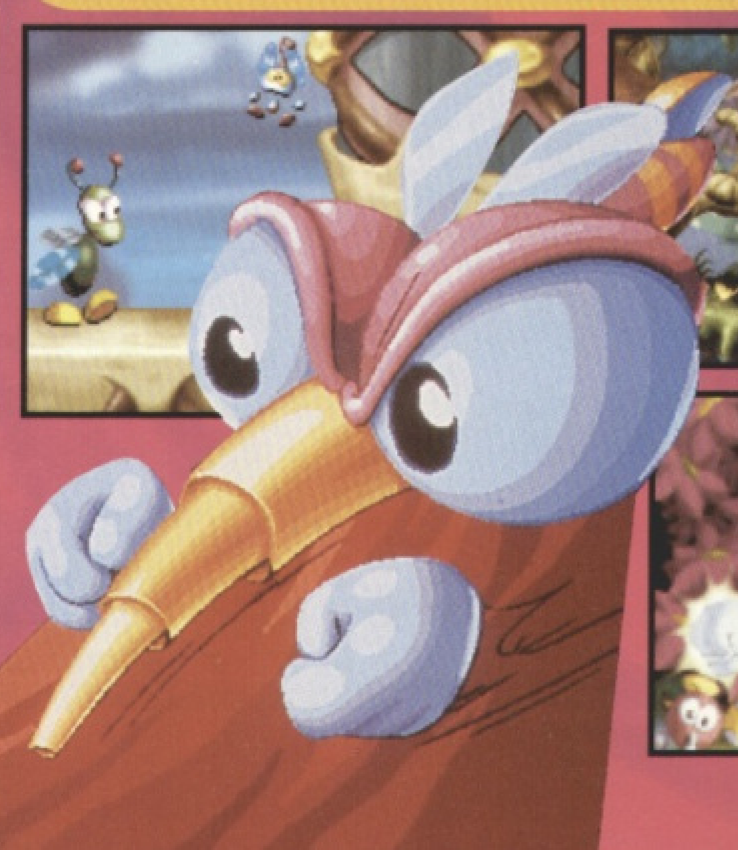
MARACAS

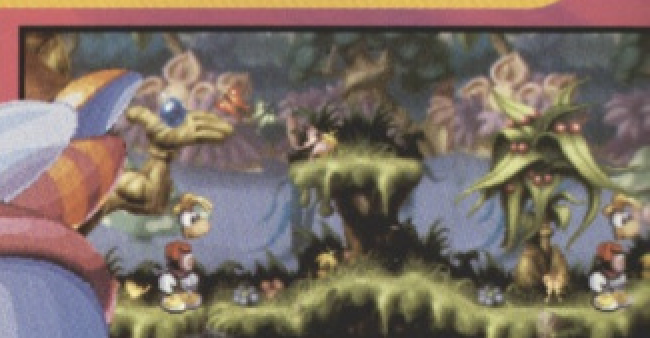
Several types of these skew-eyed shakers. Some are bouncers, others take-off like mini-rockets.

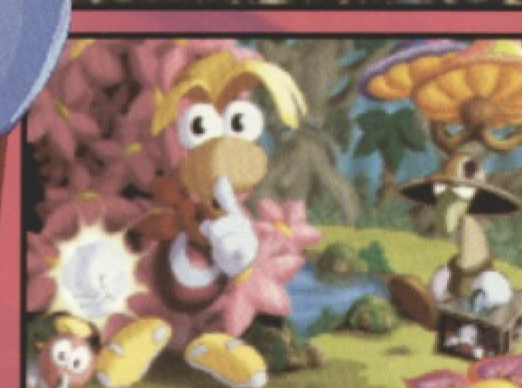
LOVE AT FIRST BITE

The unhealthy swamps are the scene for a confrontation between Rayman and a giant mosquito. After a short, but fierce battle, imagine Rayman's surprise when his insectoid foe starts sobbing. The two combatants hug each other and within seconds, Rayman is riding his new chum through the undergrowth! If only making friends in the real world was so easy...















BLUEBERRY FIELDS FOREVER

The bosom of the dream forest is a bed of fruitfulness. Huge ripe berries hang from the trees, many within Rayman's reach. Once the berries are bouncing on the forest floor, they can be put to several intriguing uses:



STEP

Use a berry as a mini platform.



RAFT

Berries chug across the dark and deadly pools.



RIDE

Berries pass across thorny ground with ease.

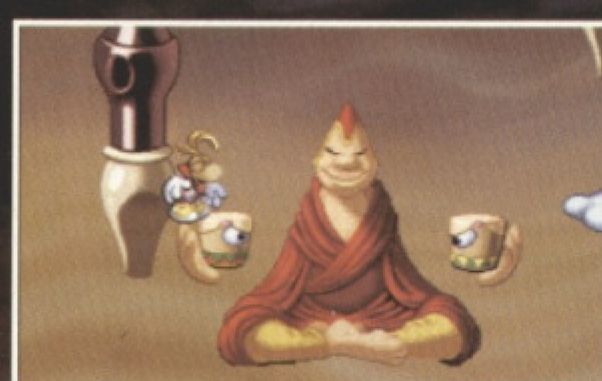


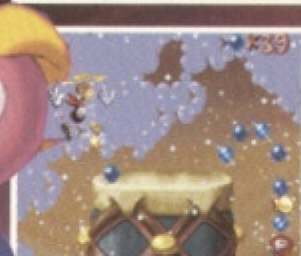
BOMB

A berry on the head disorientates a dark baddie.

MEDITATION – THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED

Rayman's head enters the clouds, and a world of contemplative, levitating figures. Crossing their bridges requires perfect concentration, and one slip sends him tumbling. Higher in the heavens, snow falls onto fluffy clouds and you think, coo, I could live here, it's so peaceful...







FOREST FIENDS

The dark minions of the Dream Forest are a creepy lot of dwarves and bean-poles, and weird sharpshooters. They'll chase Rayman, and have the intelligence to block his attacks. Always aim for the head, which is their most vulnerable area. Find the super punch icons to deal with them most effectively.













THE SNAPPER

Look out for the scruffy-looking lensmen. They'll only be too happy to take a funny pic of Rayman for free, and when he dies, he can return to that point.

Perhaps there's a bonus for finding the 'kiss me quick' hat?





RAW SAX

He's one of the bad bosses you meet, and his confrontation covers two stages. First he chases you across bandland, before cornering you in his palace and subjecting you to a bluenote solo. Once you match his music, everybody's happy again.



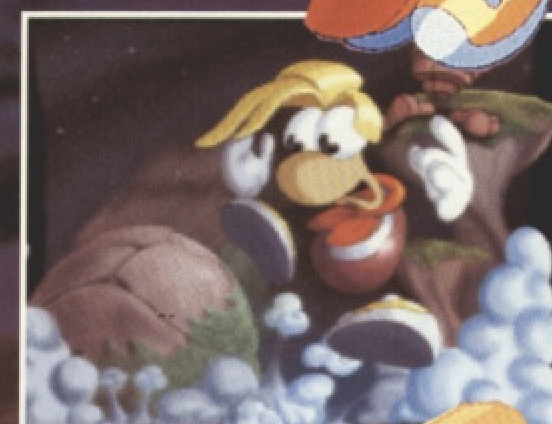


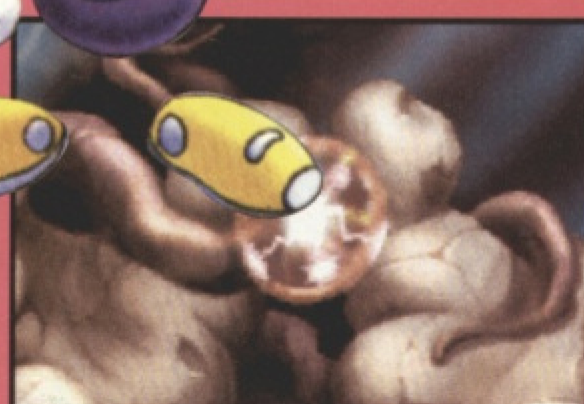


THE ROPE TRICK

Rayman's trapped in a mountain shaft — and looks to be getting shafted himself. But the helicopter hair is usefully employed to slice through the weight ropes, easing his little difficulty.









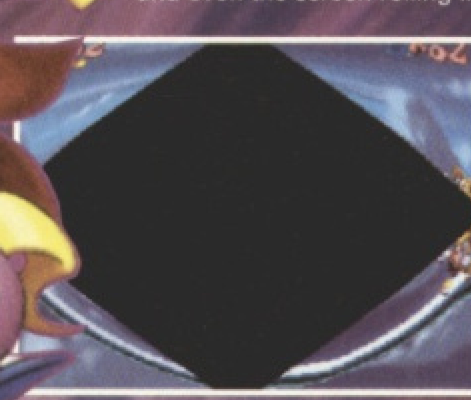




AND NOW FOR SOMETHI[NG] DIFFERENT

As a little presentational point, when each level is completed, the screen dissolves in a number of cheesy ways which are very similar to the Quantel paintbox effects used on eighties TV programmes, like Kenny Everitt's show. Witness folding screens, rippling fades, falling tiles and even the screen rolling into a ball and bouncing off the bottom.



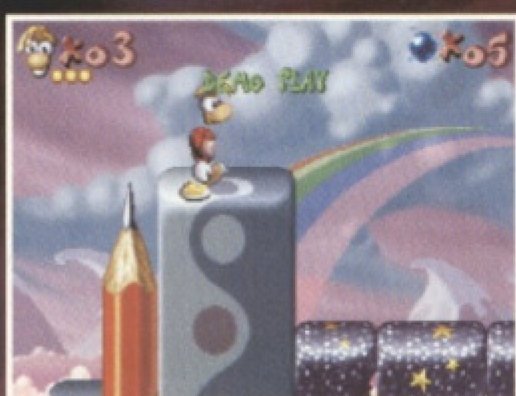






LEAD IN PENCIL

Rayman gets instant lessons in survival in the school world, with ink wells and crayon bridges dotting the playfield. The prospect of an HB up your jacksi keeps you swinging on the hooks as long as possible.





By this stage, all polished furniture in your house will be scratched.



...HING COMPLETELY









COMMENT



GUS

Everyone may go on about 3-D games on super-consoles, but the Saturn is going to need some top conventional platformers as well, if it's going to please the buyers. Rayman is an excellent example of a good, solid, platform game, and don't be persuaded otherwise. It looks great, which may be a liability, since some will dismiss it as pretty but shallow. But the game is a mean mother, with most of the seventy levels mercilessly constructed. Some of the jumps and tasks will have you screaming with frustration, but the well-planned save points prevent the task becoming too hard or too easy. Rayman's cleverest feature is the way abilities are added as you go, creating a learning curve for the finely tuned control method, and also allowing you to return to levels to uncover new secrets – many of the electoon cages are unreachable on your first trip. The character animation and sound is excellent, and there's a massive variety of scenery, and frequent changes of pace; bosses, forced-scrolling levels, flying sections. Rayman may be unsufferably cute, but it's also uncommonly good. Revel in it.

COMMENT



MARCUS

As the Rayman endurance test entered its final stages, everyone in the MEAN MACHINES office was getting seriously concerned for Gus's blood pressure. Shouting obscenities at the television set and threatening innocent passers-by with a carefully aimed joypad, Gus clearly found Rayman a game he hated to love. Everyone else's opinion has been sharply divided, and I must admit that while Rayman is technically outstanding it is certainly flawed. The marks the game's been awarded are fully deserved for sheer looks and gameplay, but let's not forget that if you scratch the surface of Rayman you find a very traditional platformer underneath. A game that's likely to drive you out of your box, admittedly, but nevertheless a very traditional game. For this reason, and this reason only, the superb Bug! has the edge for me.



GRAPHICS — 92

▲Lavish, luscious backdrops and characters, fantastically coloured.
▼Flat and two-dimensional.

ANIMATION — 92

▲Extremely detailed and lovably cute, its the little details that make the game.

MUSIC — 91

▲Over 50 interludes, some of them excellently composed. Also, original use of ambient forest soundscapes.

EFFECTS — 89

▲Hundreds of crystal clear samples as well as traditional tinkly effects.

PLAYABILITY — 90

▲A platformer's delight, with dozens of challenging and varied sections.
▼At the outset, a bit too simplistic.

LASTABILITY — 90

▲Rayman sets a massive challenge with hundreds of electoon cages to find, and some callous levels.

OVERALL

The Saturn has a platformer worthy of its format. Not just a pretty face, but a hugely entertaining game.

91

WORK IN PROGRESS

PROJECT
SIM CITY 2000

PUBLISHER
MAXIS/SEGA

INITIATED
JUNE '94

RELEASE
WINTER '95

FORMAT
SATURN

DEVELOPERS
MAXIS



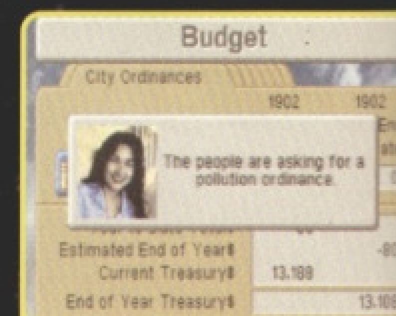
You'd have to be mad to want to be involved in government at the moment. Which probably explains why we're being governed by a bunch of loonies. Still, if you don't mind being subjected to rabid public abuse, and fancy yourself as Maggie's spawn, the Saturn will soon have the game for you.

It's a conversion by Maxis of their own PC hit, Sim City 2000. That, in turn, was a radical update of the city-building strategy game that Maxis built their business on. Like the original, all the 'action' is set in a land area within a 'Sim Nation' where you build your new town.

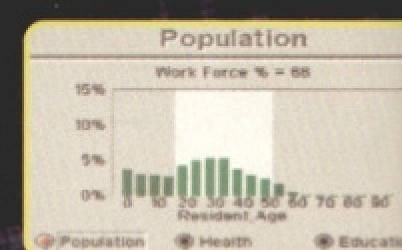
Okay, 'action' means exciting things like town planning, levying parking fines and deciding whether another fire station in the north-east sector is really quite necessary. But there must be something in it considering the game has been a runaway best seller and has avid fans worldwide.

Maxis have taken the opportunity to make some revisions to their computer versions, with new graphic libraries and a simplified command structure, necessitated by the change from keyboard to joypad. Whether it's the kind of game that stirs Saturn owners remains to be seen, but seen quite soon.





This friendly young gal comes up with all kinds of new ways of making cash.



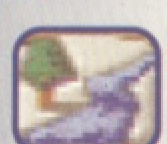
STRIP EASE

All the Sim City commands are accessed by a strip of icons on the left hand side. Maxis have enlarged and simplfied the command strip for Saturn, presumably as it will be played by a wider audience than the PC versions – simpletons and MEAN MACHINES readers alike. Now, instead of having all icons on the screen at once, only five are visible, with the rest scrolled to. Further sub menus are accessed by moving to the right. These are the areas of control you have:

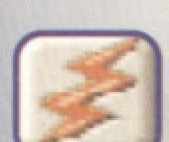
LAND
A wide array of basic commands, from levelling land to demolishing sites.



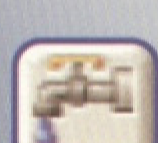
LANDSCAPING
More basic commands allowing you to add trees and lakes.



POWER
Both power generation and transmission are dealt with here.



WATER
All aspects of water supply and storage contained here.



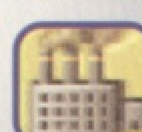
ZONE RESIDENTIAL
Houses, apartments, churches, condos etc.



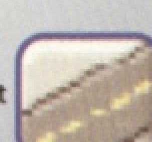
ZONE COMMERCIAL
Business, leisure, retail, hoteling etc.



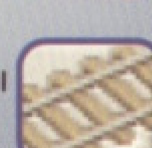
ZONE INDUSTRIAL
Chemical plants, manufacturing, warehousing etc.



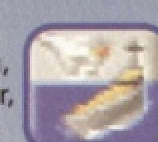
ROAD
Concerning road transport links on land and water.



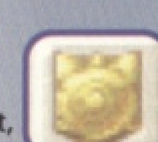
RAIL
Concerning all rail and underground.



PORT
Zoning of areas as sea, air, and, later, space ports.



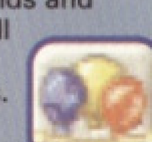
MUNICIPAL
Services from law enforcement, and fire provision to medical.



EDUCATION
Including schools, higher education and facilities like museums.



RECREATIONAL
Sports grounds and parks, as well as zoos and amusements.



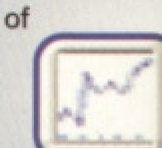
LANDMARKS
Special buildings and state-funded projects.



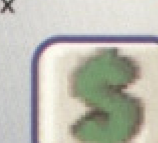
EMERGENCY
Panic button to call services to a disaster area.



GRAPHS
Show status of city in key policy areas.



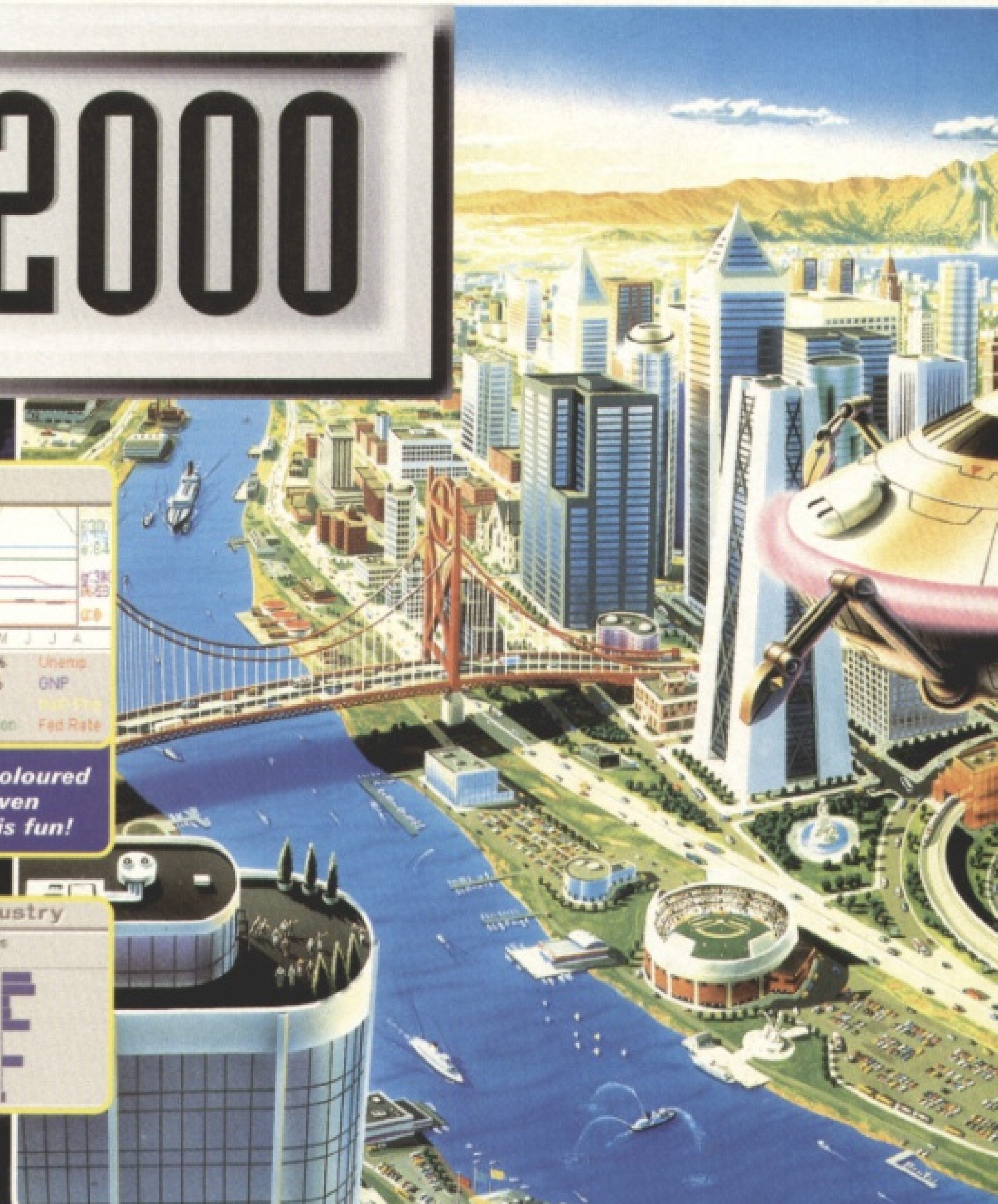
BUDGET
For setting tax rates and ordinances, and taking advice from your policy group.

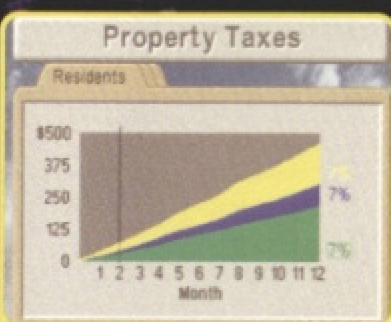


CITY INDUSTRY
Breakdown of business.

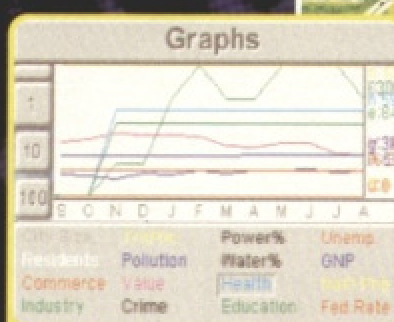


SIM CITY 2000



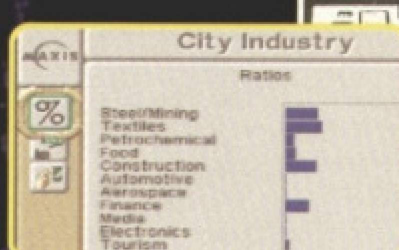


Read my lips: Lots More Taxes!



With these multi-coloured graph squiggles, even running a council is fun!





POPULATION
Map showing age/health profile of your city.



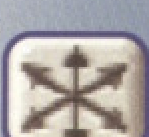
MAP
View of city with factors shaded in.



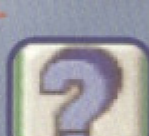
SIM NATION
Displays the performance of nearby towns.



VIEWS
Changing the way your city is presented on screen.

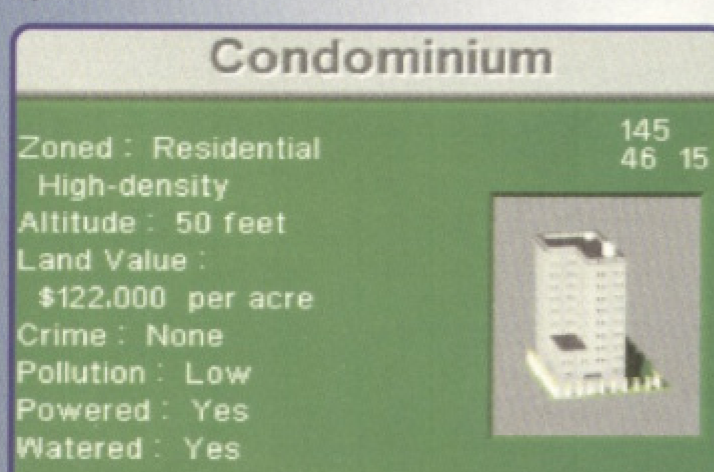


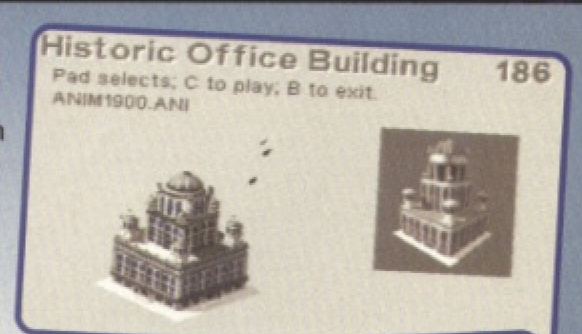
QUERY TOOL
Details any element of your city.

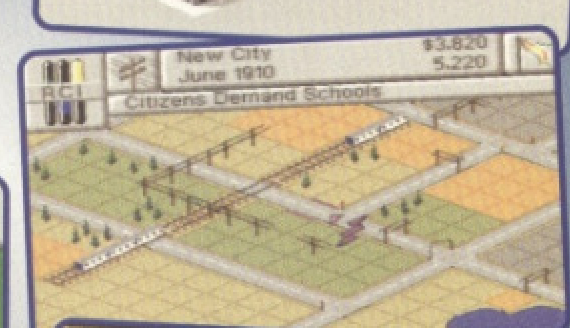


NEW BABYLON

Sim City's character is partly chaotic, as your population will build anything anywhere, within the confines of your zoning and planning. Watch buildings come and go, replaced by new structures. These range from the humblest hovels, to gleaming corporate glass towers. Maxis have created a larger library than ever, making the Saturn cities look even more randomised. The game's four different time zones (start in 1900, 1950, 2000 or 2050) and each have their own architectural style.















THE SIM SECRET

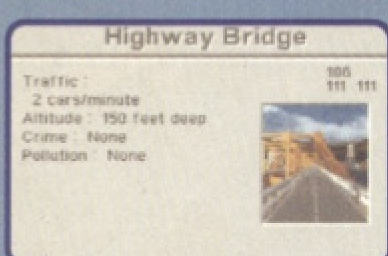
Players of the original Sim City 2000 may have been puzzled by the arcologies and their supposed secret. These huge buildings occured later in the game and were meant to offer a solution to the game. Apparently this was not programmed at the time. However, the arcologies in the Saturn version will be able to perform this final intrepid function, which takes them spaceward to initiate new colonies!

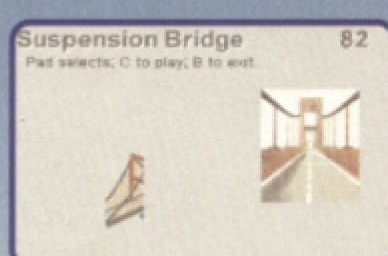


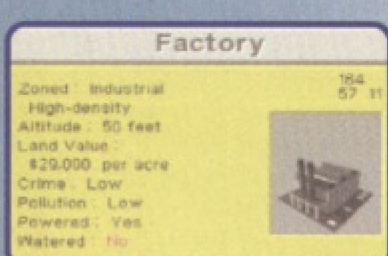


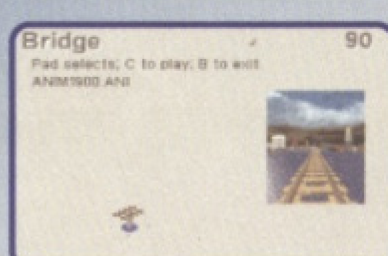
THE CITYSCAPE

Maxis are including animated vignettes which are unique to the Saturn version. At present, when you use the query tool it displays a rotating render of the building, or an animated sequence for bridges and roads. Other animated features may find their way into the final game. There are eight rotational stances and more positions offered for viewing the city than before. A quick zoom camera brings you close-ups of your mini-civilisation.

















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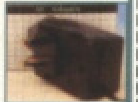
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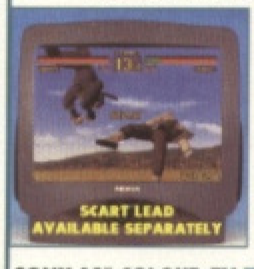




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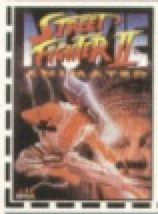


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JANUARY '95

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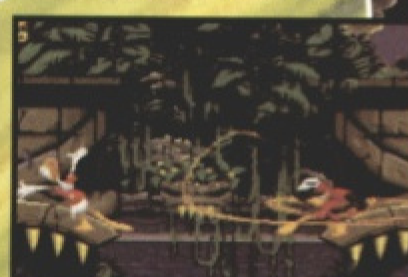
FORMAT
MEGADRVE

DEVELOPERS
DISNEY

Exploring exotic uncharted territory is a risky business at the best of times, but Disney's favourite duck remains undaunted. Keeping himself off the menu becomes a full-time occupation for Donald in this geographically ambitious platformer. A remote island is the setting for Donald's latest test of endurance, which sees him assigned to recover a powerful Mojo idol, thus calming the ancient rumblings that threaten destruction. Fending off the voodoo spirits, Donald journeys from the cavernous cellar of a haunted house to a perilous volcanic lava flow and a graveyard crawling with zombies in order to restore the magical idol to its rightful place.

Maui Mallard is a traditional game revolving around a traditional license, but it nevertheless promises some spirited settings, challenging gameplay and funny sequences of frightened ducks falling to their doom from great heights. Work is continuing on the later levels and some of the existing sections are awaiting the odd tweak, but what we've seen so far holds some promise. In your hands, then, lies the fate of Donald – triumphant private eye or crispy duck? In a game that promises to play like a surreal episode of Hawaii Five-0, it's down to you...







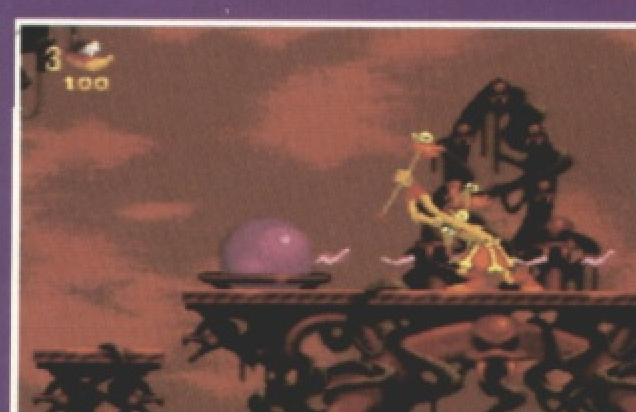


LIFE COULD BE A DREAM

Your pop gun provides little defence against some of the more unpleasant upstarts you encounter on your journey. Here's a rogues gallery of Maowi Mallard scalliwags that come between you and the improbably named Shabuhm Shabuhm idol.



Torch-bearing pirate zombies threaten you with a fate worse than plucking.



Big voodoo geezers wave large pointy sticks at you.

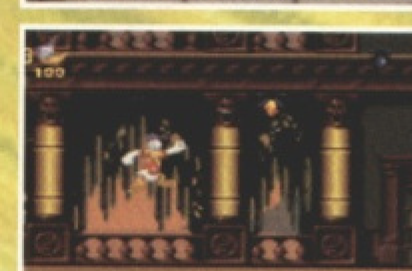


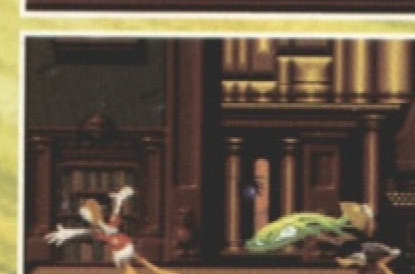
On the ninja level, Aztec high priests prove a sight for sore eyes. You've been Tango'd.



Even under the sea, there's no refuge from mad green blokes.

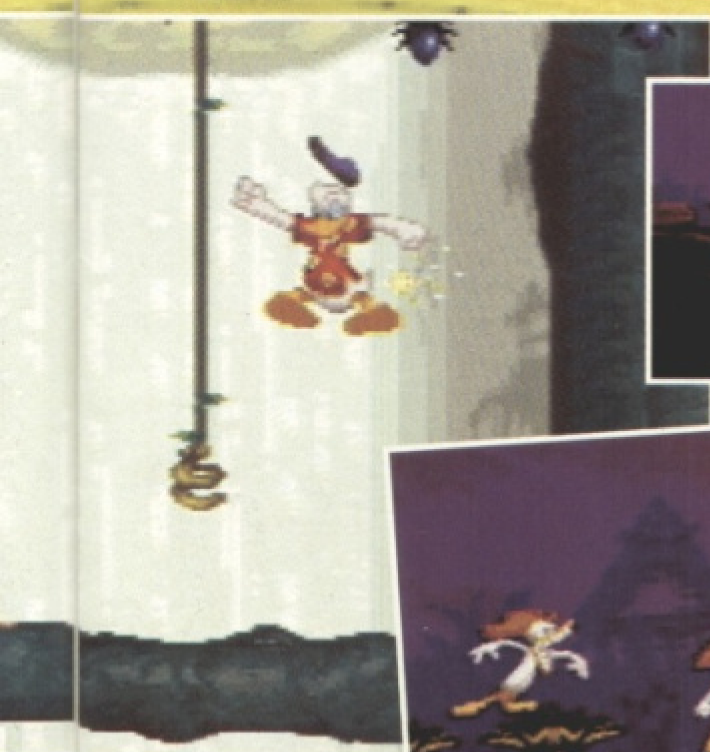






ALD DUCK IN AUI LLARD







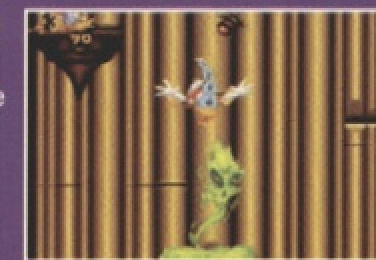




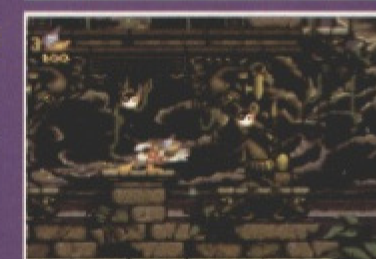
Secret rooms hide many-legged level bosses, ready to fry first and ask questions later.

ISLE JINKS

MOJO MANSION
The game kicks off in a sprawling old house. Navigate through secret passages and up a giant haunted pipe organ.



NINJA TRAINING
The second level takes place in a jungle scenario. Fight off the marauding voodoo spirits to survive.



MUD MAYHEM
Not being able to fly becomes a distinct disadvantage when struggling along the sloping platforms in the third level.



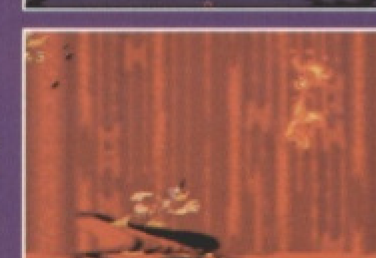
DUCKHOOD
On the Duckhood level you swing from the jungle trees in demented Tarzan by bunjee jumping on elastic vines. As you bounce back up, leap for the nearest branch.



DUCKMAN
Voodoo bad guys and various other ne'er do wells accost you on the fifth level. Watch out for those flaming torches.



VOLCANO
Watch the clock on this level before you get engulfed in molten lava. Before you know it you'll be up to your beak in it.



ZOMBIE
You get accosted by scary-boo undead-type blokes in the penultimate level. And a very big eye. Probably.



STRONGHOLD
The game's finale is still under wraps, but expect some of these purple blobs to pop up somewhere along the line.



PROJECT
DARXIDE

PUBLISHER
SEGA

INITIATED
AUGUST '94

RELEASE
NOVEMBER '95

FORMAT
32X

DEVELOPERS
FRONTIER

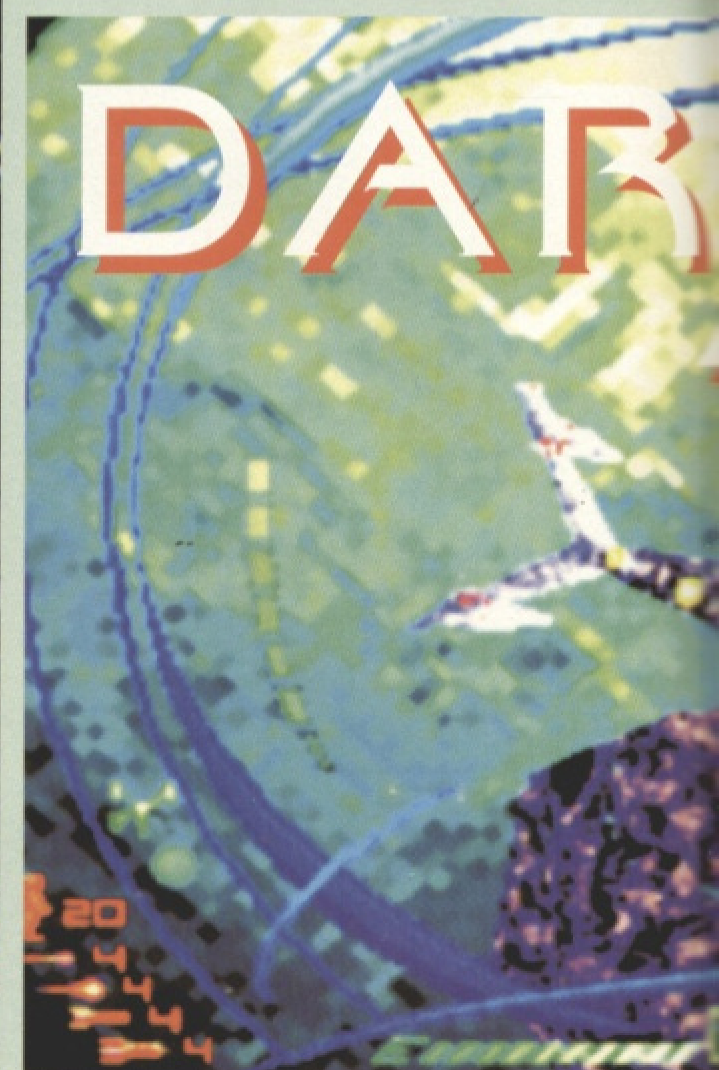
Programmer David Braben changed the face of computer gaming with the legendary Elite. He's now turned his attention to arcade-style gaming, and Sega, for the first time. Marcus spoke to him, and sneaked a look at his latest project.

David Braben is a self-confessed Defender fan so if his Sega debut, Darxide, owes a debt of gratitude to the classic arcade shoot 'em up of years gone by it's perhaps a natural evolution.

Darxide stretches the 32X by employing both the machine's graphics chips to full effect with a new 3-D system. Perhaps best described as a three dimensional take on Asteroids, the game nonetheless resembles the more exciting combat sequences from Elite. But where Elite limped along with wireframe animations, Darxide sports fully texture-mapped graphics. And while Asteroids sometimes resembled a spectator sport, Darxide places you right in the thick of the action.

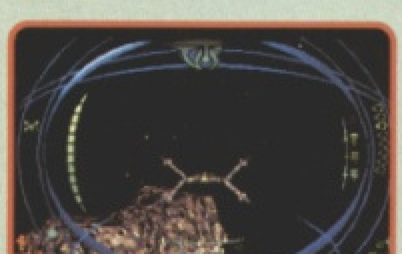
Set in the distant future, Darxide depicts mankind's attempts to mine precious crystals from a string of moons. This profitable operation continues until the alien civilisation who own the moons take exception to hordes of Earth ships stealing their assets. The aliens retaliate by sending waves of asteroids into the area, some armed with deadly gun turrets. The mining nevertheless remains a highly profitable operation and many remain undeterred. You take the role of a heavily armed fighter pilot who decides the rewards outweigh the growing risks.

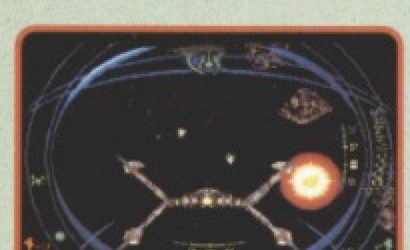
"We're really pushing the 32X with this one," says Braben of his new departure, "and we're determined to make it really playable. After all, being fun is the whole point really, isn't it?" Hear, hear.

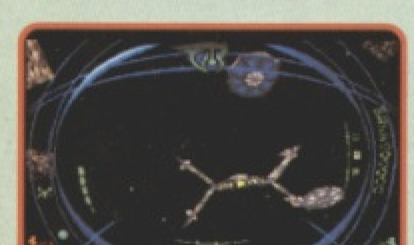


MANIC MINERS

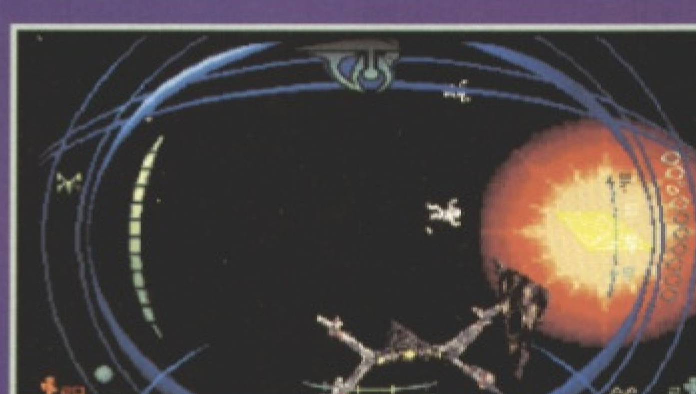
Some rookie miners are so obsessed that they continue mining during the heaviest bombardments and hang on to asteroids with grim determination. Destruction of said asteroids sends them drifting off into space. As gameplay continues, their dying screams can be heard over the cacophony long after they've last been spotted.







There are no plans to give Darxide away with PC mags. Whoops!









ALIEN WAR

The disgruntled aliens themselves maintain quite a low profile during the game, but when they appear in purple and red flying saucers it means trouble. Destruction of asteroids occasionally frees them from their cores, but marauding mother ships and fighters can also invade your space. Watch out also for drifting gun displacements – destruction of the asteroids they're bolted to doesn't necessarily put them out of action.



SOUND BITES

Some of the most impressive elements of Darxide are the depth-cued sounds. Echoing explosions and strafing laser fire join with the pitiful screams of drifting astronaut miners. The finished game will feature sampled speech, including a sultry in-flight computer to offer advice and tips.











BATTLE COMPUTER

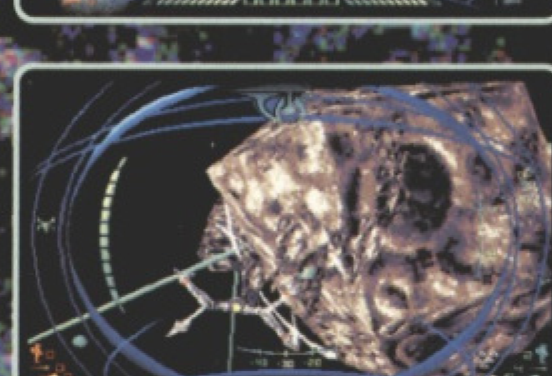
The pictures on these pages are taken from a prototype version of one of the game's proposed eleven levels. The cockpit screen set-up is likely to undergo some transformation in the finished version, with an Elite-style radar/scanner added to ease detection of enemy ships. When in close range, the targetting system cleverly 'clamps' virtual cross-hairs onto the nearest asteroid and guides your laser fire accordingly. For extra firepower, additional weaponry can be added from power-ups secreted inside inside some asteroids. Simply blow the asteroids up and fly through their glowing cores.















PROJECT	RIGLORD SAGA
PUBLISHER	SEGA
INITIATED	APRIL '95
RELEASE	SPRNG '96
FORMAT	SATURN
DEVELOPERS	SEGA

Ri

Riglord Saga was well-received in Japan this summer, and Sega have firm plans to release the RPG here early in the new year. This may be just the game to attract lovers of their 16bit hits, Shining Force and Shining Force II, to the Saturn...

Long in production and epic in scale, Riglord Saga shares many elements with the Shining Force games, even though it was produced by a different team. You take a band of fighters through the environs of a kingdom under seige, going into a series of battles against the forces of evil. The game also relies a lot on plot, with defections, betrayals, surprise attacks and twists changing the course of the adventure.

The characters have all been created from detailed renders, and also form the striking artwork to the game. The characters cover the varied abilities of any adventure party; from a cleric, who looks like Pamela Anderson on her way to a society wedding, to a lion-man, bird man, and the cute one (you). You have access to all manner of statistics on the team, even so the menu interface is surprisingly quick and easy to use.

While not having quite the cachet of Virtua Fighter 2 or Sega Rally, Sega adventurers are advised to start sharpening their swords now.



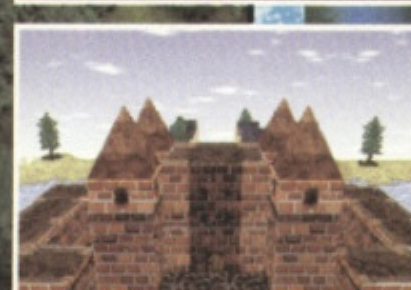


A giant chameleon in a party hat crosses your path.











Dungeon derring-do.



FEEL THE WIDTH

Riglord Saga has had a lot of coverage in the Japanese press, mainly because it's such a vast game. You definitely need to use the ROM to save your positions and characters as they progress. Magical and fighting powers appear as you go, gained by experience and special learning bonuses earned in combat. The reason for the game's delay, despite a Japanese release, is translating all the story and speech into our favourite language, English.



glordsaga™











YOU SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND

Riglord Saga effectively says cheerio to the conventional overhead-viewed action of most RPGs, since it uses a selection of almost-isometric, almost-virtual perspectives. The battle scenes cover many screens, which can be scanned quickly with a cursor, and a grid overlayed to show your movement and fighting range. When you go into action, the viewpoint swings to show your attack, or spell, as it works. You can even choose a first person true 3-D perspective during your preparation stages.







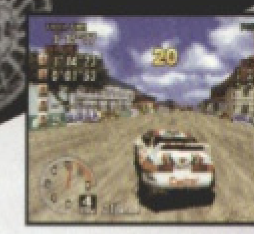


SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 1995

BY	SEGA (AM3)
GAME TYPE	DRIVING
PRICE	IMPORT (£85)
RELEASE	DECEMBER
PLAYERS	1-2

COMPLETE

At once stablemates and rivals, AM2 and AM3 take turns to hog the arcade limelight, with each subsequent release a quantum leap in gaming technology. AM2 stole acclaim with Daytona and Virtua Cop, but then AM3 arrived with their intriguing interpretation of off-road racing with Sega Rally. AM3's rough-terrain, ultra fast and ultra realistic racer is miles away from AM2's formula-driven antics. Sega Rally appeals to a different sort of gamer – one who enjoys the challenge of keeping a careening saloon under control in treacherous conditions. Nigel Mansells need not apply, Marc Bolan fans, on the other hand, walk this way...



Rally's success (it is, by all accounts doing as well in the arcades as Daytona) has led to a quick conversion to the Saturn, overseen by AM3. The early versions are pretty astounding, representing a leap in programming since the Daytona conversion. The undulating, highly textured tracks of the coin-op are translated faithfully, achieving the same smoothness and look of blurred speed.

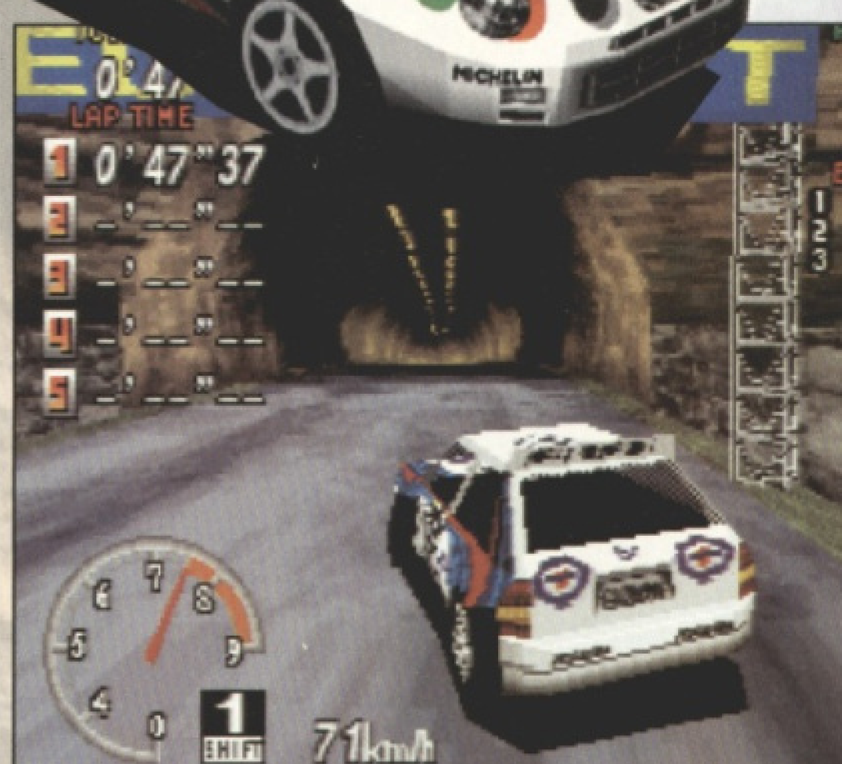
Also pleasing the anoraks is the absence of the notorious 'clipping' scandal that dogged Daytona. Blocks of landscape do not appear suddenly and messily in the background, with Sega Rally's scenery appearing in flawless 3-D. Not that this is our main concern anyway. It's playability that counts and there the two racers are quite different beasts. AM3 are concentrating on getting the wild feel of skating on mud at 100mph, and all indications are that this will play like no driving game you have yet encountered. Best of all, you'll get to enjoy this experience sometime before Christmas, if Sega have their way.

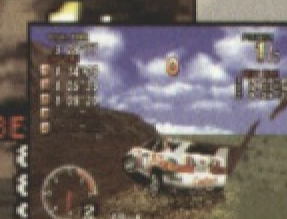


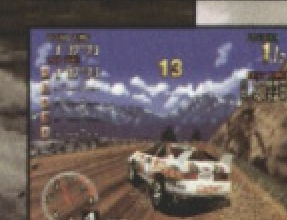
THE PLOT THICKENS

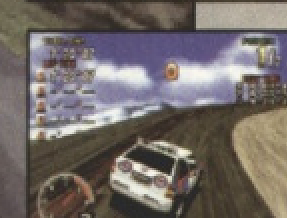
One method for optimising speed in the game comes from the positioning of computer cars. In Daytona, the computer plotted the position of all forty vehicles, regardless of them being on screen or not. Sega Rally only handles the visible cars, allowing more processing time.













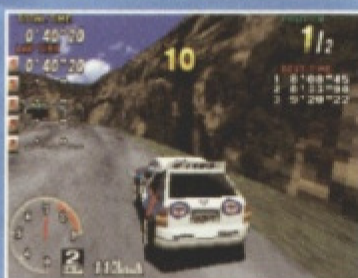


BLUR'S COUNTRY JAUNT

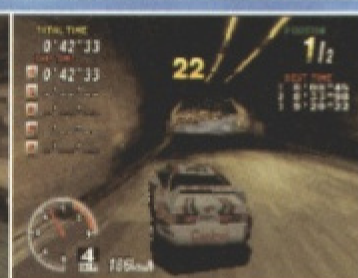
Sega Rally has three courses (well, four with the hidden one) each with a country feel to them. There is forest, desert, and mountain scenery, each with a stylised thick graphic texturing, giving a feeling of speed. There will also be a championship mode, and possibly a two-player split-screen mode.



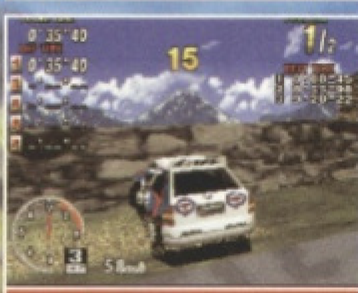




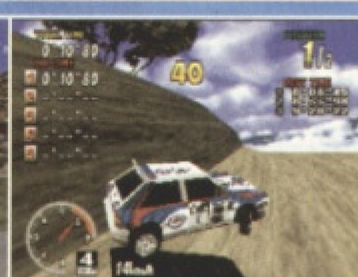
Sunday afternoon spins are interrupted...



...by dank tunnels...



...brick walls...



...and Gus's inability to drive straight.

BETTER RING THE ROYAL

Rally features 12 cars, which are all of the saloon racing class familiar in our cross country competitions. The handling of these four-wheel drive machines is more meticulously programmed than ever, with crashes and wear affecting your vehicle. Toyota and Lancia, whose cars feature, assisted in the making of the game



PREVIEWS



Nearly three years ago, an unknown developer caused a stir with a startlingly original game for the Megadrive. The developer was Novotrade, the game Ecco the Dolphin. The underwater adventure provided one of the most dramatic success stories for that console, and Sega must be hoping that their next avant garde project does the same for the 32X.

Kolibri is a suitably strange name for a bizarre game scenario that sees you in control of a humble hummingbird. In an opening sequence reminiscent of Ecco, the natural harmony of the hummingbirds' environment has been shattered by an unknown force, and soon wasps, ants, and spiders are teeming across the forest floor. Kolibri's firepower is used to drive the creepy crawlies away, thus encouraging the return of his turbo-winged mates.

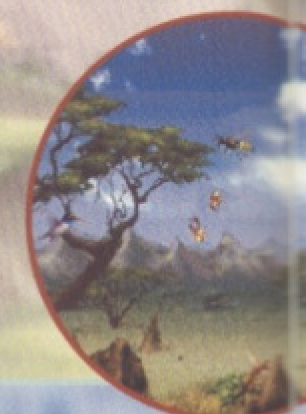
Novotrade have lavished serious attention on the graphics, with full-colour backdrops of pretty flora and woodland fauna, with the 32X employing its hardware to create layers of parallax to add solidity to the scrolling levels. But the game appears to be no dumb looker, with dozens of levels of shoot 'em up action, tricky but responsive controls, and puzzle elements complicating matters further.

Since its launch the 32X seems to have attracted several of these unlicensed, unassuming, but highly playable games – Stellar Assault and Motherbase come to mind. Will Kolibri join their ranks? MEAN MACHINES and SEGA reveal all next issue.









Kolibri

BY: NOVOTRADE

GAME TYPE: SHOOT 'EM UP

RELEASE: DECEMBER

PRICE: TBA

1 PLAYERS

16 MEG

COMPLETE





FLOWER POWER

Flora figures throughout this game, with eye-catching blooms on almost every screen. Some of these prove hazardous (the inhaling tulips are especially deadly) but Kolibri needs these flowers as well. Many are returned to a healthy hue from their ashen grey when predators are driven away.













Long-tongued lizards are one of the most dangerous hazards...

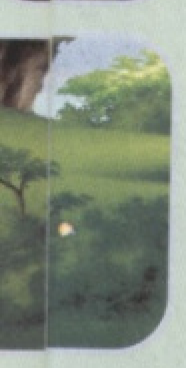














BIRD OF PREY

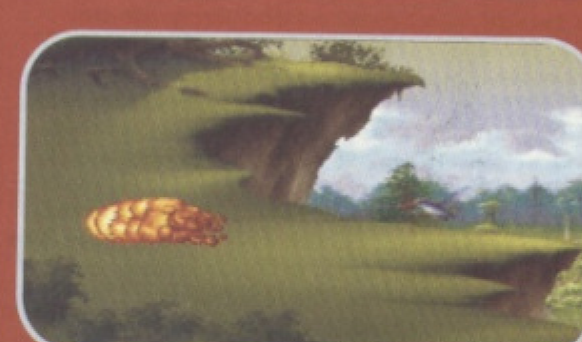
Kolibri is as well-tooled as a hummingbird gets. His rapid-fire projectiles are effective enough, but there's power-ups to be had, many issuing from mysterious crystals dotting the landscape. These pods change Kolibri's weapon to one of many alternatives, each proving useful in certain situations; lasers, homing shots and scatter bombs included. Protective auras and energy replacements figure also, with Kolibri's 'lives' swarming around him when replenished.











STREET RACER

BY: UBI-SOFT

GAME TYPE: DRIVING

RELEASE: NOVEMBER

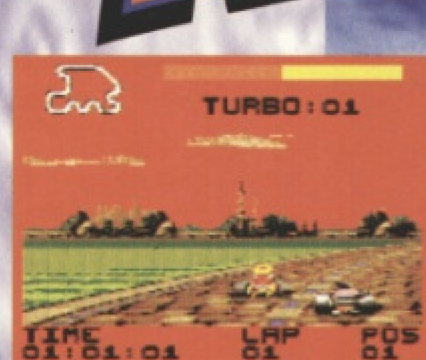
PRICE: TBA

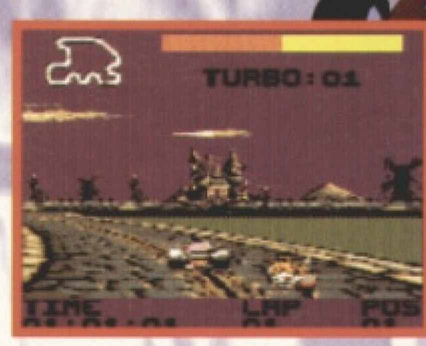
1-2 PLAYERS

2 MEG

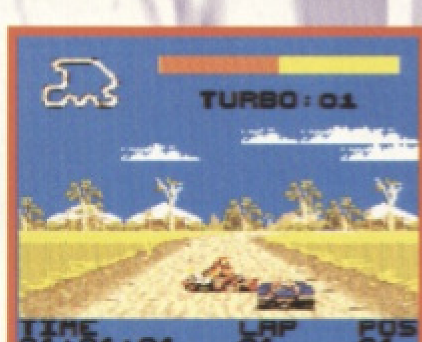
COMPLETE







Programmer Mev Dinc prefers the Game Gear to the Megadrive in some key respects...



...and plans to exploit the handheld machines range of colours as fully as possible.

Following the considerable success of the Megadrive game (Street Racer has rarely been out of the charts all year) Vivid Image set to work on a version for the Game Gear. Mev Dinc, producer of the previous game, has kept details of the handheld version secret until now.

The ethos behind the conversion is one of not compromising, and even of improving on the previous formats. Vivid Image have used the graphics from the Megadrive version, which look strikingly detailed on the Game Gear's tiny screen. The scrolling is pretty amazing too, with as many frames for smoothness as before.

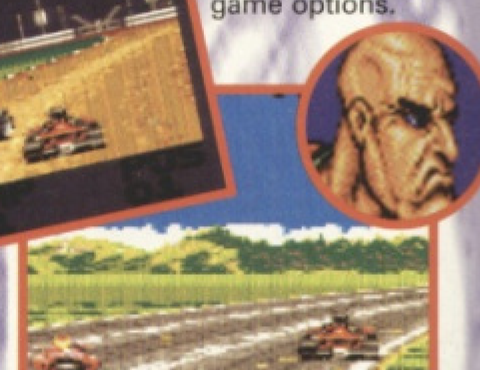
Vivid Image has acquired the programmer behind the brilliant Earthworm Jim conversion to the Game Gear, which scored a convincing 91% a few months ago. Both he and Mev have become convinced of the humble handheld's powers during the development process.

That process has so far taken three months, and they plan to wrap the game up within the next two – pretty sharp programming, even for a Game Gear title. Owners of the Megadrive title should be glad to know the course layouts have changed, although all other features are intact. Catch a review here very soon.

CABLE CARS

Street Racer will feature a link-up option to allow two players to take part. There are eight player characters to choose from, with the same special powers of the original game, and their individual race settings. There's also due to be a large range of other game options.





The Game Gear Street Racer will feature options not available on the Megadrive version.

REWIND

Amazingly, Vivid Image plan to include the multi-viewpoint race playback option found in the Megadrive. The feature, allowing you to view the previous race from various angles was impressive on the 16bit, but would be unprecedented on the handheld. Just wait and see.

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BY: ACCLAIM
GAME TYPE: ADVENTURE
1 PLAYERS
PRICE: TBA
RELEASE: NOVEMBER
COMPLETE

D'S DIN

One gamestyle has proved remarkably popular in the Japanese Saturn market over the last year — the relatively new genre of the interactive 'movie' adventure. Numerous examples have emerged or are under way: Yumemi Mansion, Dracula Detective, Rampo, Psychic Detective. And now, Acclaim's first stab at the 32bit CD-ROM market – D's Dining Table.

The origin of this genre, which has swept the Japanese off their feet, is Anglo-American. Both Myst from Cyan, and Virgin's 7th Guest can claim to be forerunners of these puzzle-driven epics whose appeal is firmly in the adult market.

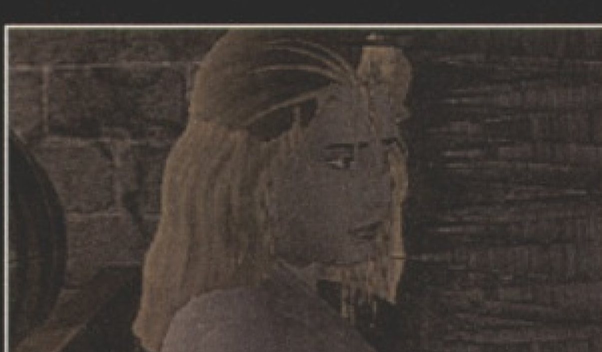
In common with these titles, and Sega's Yumemi Mansion, D's Dining Table immerses the player in a convincing and eerie world rendered entirely from 3-D computer generated graphics. Supernatural themes allow for special effects to be incorporated into the story. Contrasting with the sophisticated presentation, the player interface is very basic, with simple directional and pointer commands. It's a strange breed of game, and no mistake.

However, D's Dining Table is probably the spookiest, cleverest and best produced yet. Constructed by the little known 'Warp' team of developers, it has an uncompromisingly movie-esque atmosphere, supported by a tense orchestral score, and using schlock-horror scary bits to induce some pant accidents along the way. This perhaps explains why it's the fastest-shifting Saturn disc of late in Nippon. Acclaim are also committed to bringing the game here, and soon, with an English translation version in the bag. If you can appreciate its niche value, be ready for it.



THEY CALL ME NAUGHTY LOLA

Just for a change you get your hands on a sophisticated chick who obviously spends a few bob at the hairdressers. You are Lola, and by all accounts you've been unlucky in the parental stakes, with a psychopathic father who has run amok in a Los Angeles hospital. Lola sets out to confront him before he does any more damage, but repressed memories afflict her and deepen the mystery.












Your dad kills some people.


You in your car. Nice wheels, Lola.



Oh matron!...


Papa's 'handiwork'.



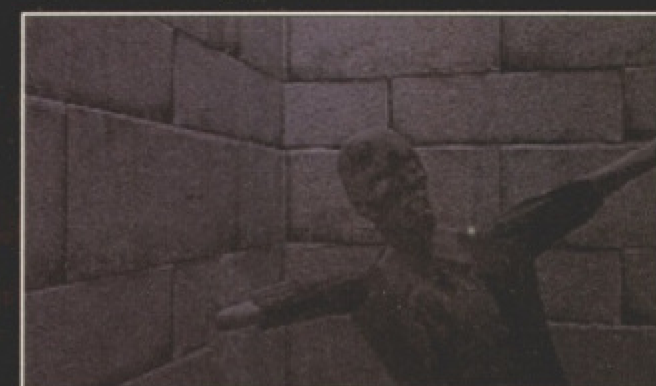




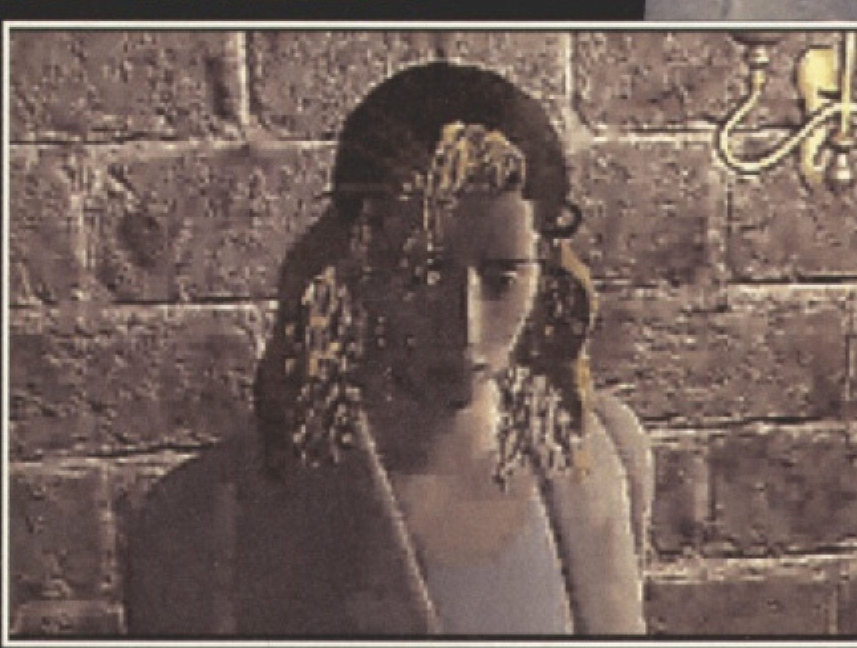


DIAL D FOR MURDER

D's Dining Table may well warrant a '15' or higher rating in this country, as it pretty much dwells on murder, mutilation, impaling on steel spikes and beetles. All guaranteed to upset kiddiewinks and Tory MPs. Huzzah. Nothing in the game is really that scary, but D's scene-setting and atmosphere is nicely developed across the game's twin disks.



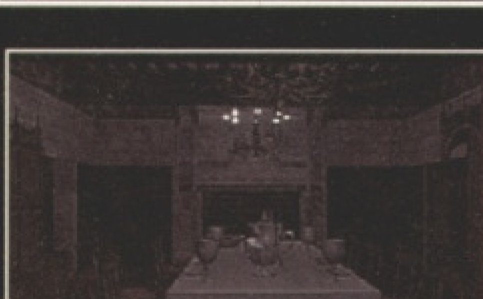
...NING TABLE











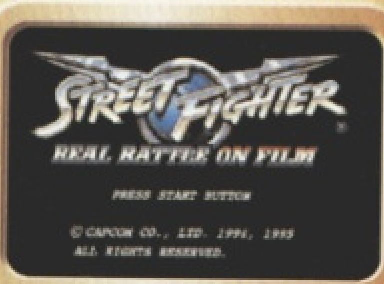
The answer lies in this room.



Lola experiences an 'attack'.



Weird visions assault her senses.



BY: CAPCOM

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

1-2 PLAYERS

PRICE: IMPORT (£85)

RELEASE: NOW

COMPLETE: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The tricky thing about writing sitcoms, is knowing when nobody is laughing any more. There's a small group of blokes writing most of TV's sitcoms, and eventually one of their shows loses its 'sparkle'. Hi-de-Hi, pour example. Yes, the Hawaiian ballroom saw some great gags in its time, yes we all giggled when Peggy got a bollocking off Miss Cathcart, but finally enough was enough and it was time to hang up the yellow coats.

And so to Street Fighter, or is that Street Fighter 2? Search me, there's been so many versions of this game that everyone except the anoraks have lost count. This is, however, the movie version of Streetfighter. Capcom spent a packet earlier this year bringing their video game characters to life in a strangely amusing film adaptation, and this game offshoot uses the locations and digitised characters from the film. This first Saturn Streetfighter also ties in with the movie coin-op version (confused?) although it apparently plays quite differently – the backdrops have changed and the characters react differently. The major change from Super Streetfighter II are the super combo moves, which are available after your character has inflicted major damage. These are the most difficult specials to pull off, but you are rewarded by a blinding series of devastating attacks. Some of the old SFII characters have been put out to pasture: Dhalsim, Fei Long and T.Hawk, but their place is taken by Capt. Sawada, a mysterious goodie character who appeared in the film. This latest in the series is due out around November courtesy of Acclaim, who are distributing the game in Europe. It's now available on import. Can you be persuaded to take just one last tango?



FLASHBACK

As you might expect, there's a fair bit of the movie on disk, displayed as compressed video between the bouts in Movie Battle mode. The most notable feature is not Kylie as Cammy, or Raul Julia's outrageous costumes, but the quality of the footage itself. Normally video displayed from the CD is of poor quality, but Capcom have managed to present full screen footage that is almost up to MPEG standards. Next month Des Lynam asks, "How did they do that?"



Relax girls, he's Belgian. And he's got a blue hat.

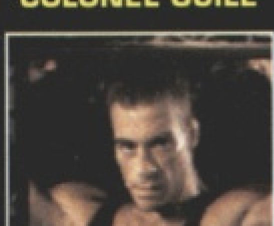




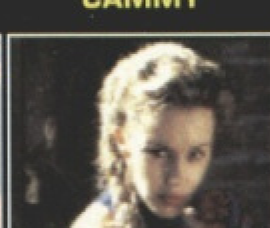




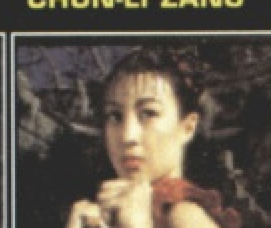
COLONEL GUILE



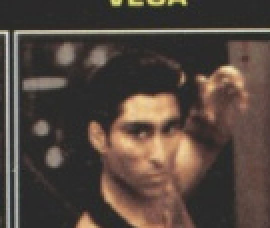
CAMMY



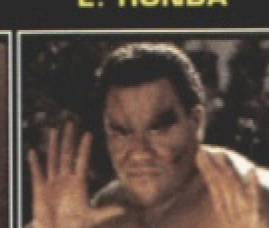
CHUN-LI ZANG



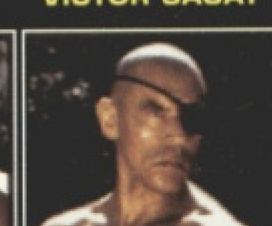
VEGA



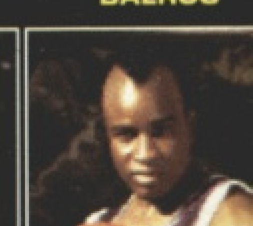
E. HONDA



VICTOR SAGAT



BALROG





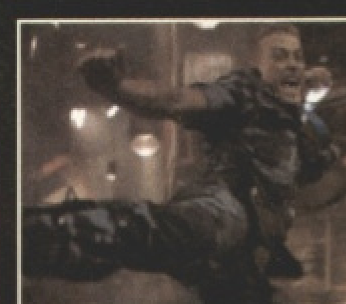


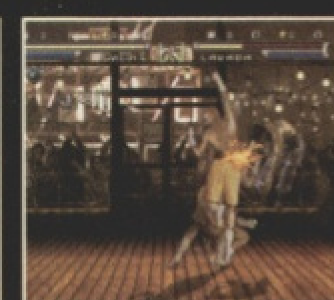
BLINDING

There is one supercombo move for each character, restricted by the super combo meter under your health bar. They're tricky to pull off – usually two conventional specials in quick succession, but you are rewarded with a blur of movement and a huge attack. A super combo can easily inflict 75% damage. Even more rewarding is seeing the super combo end a round, which is accompanied by a blinding background flash.



FIGHTER™ THE MOVIE









CARLOS BLANKA



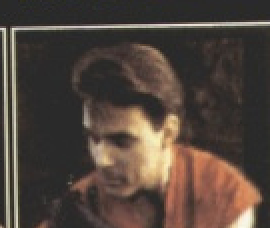
DEE JAY



ZANGIEF



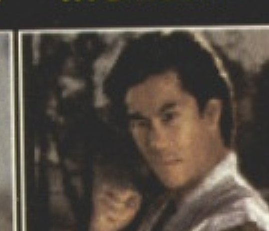
KEN MASTERS



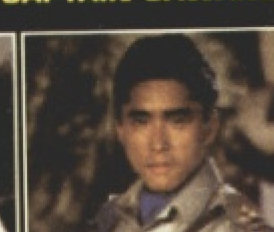
GENERAL BISON



RYU HOSHI



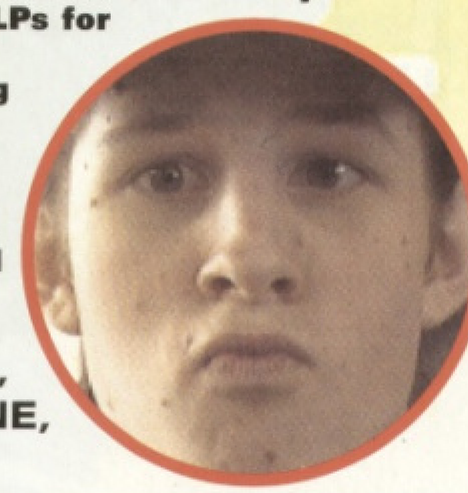
CAPTAIN SAWANDA



TIPS

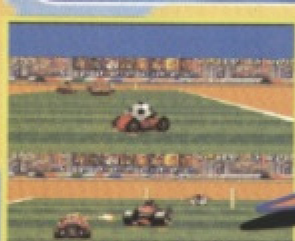
The dark side if the moon hides many mysterious phenomena, not least of which is Ed Lomas. Crouched in a cramped crater, with only a festering stack of quadrophonic Pink Floyd LPs for company, Space Cadet Lomas devotes his secluded lifestyle to the pursuit of gathering and discovering tips and cheats, collecting tour T-shirts and saving up for a ticket home in time for the next Floyd concert. With a mere 7 years between albums, he should make it back in time even on what we pay him. In the meantime, however, all cheats and tips will be rerouted (by interstellar overdrive) if addressed to:

YOU TIP ME UP, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.



MEGADRIVE

STREET RACER



STREET RACER

CHARACTER EDIT

Steve Kirk from Portsmouth has come up with this brilliant cheat to let you edit the abilities of all of the characters. Go to the character select screen and press A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B and you'll hear a cheer. If you now hold A and press Right you'll see the power bars move up. You can select different bars by holding A and pressing Up or Down. Brilliant!



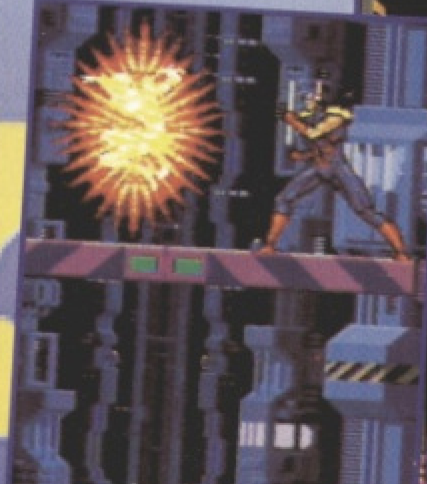
X-MEN 2:THE CLONE WARS



99 LIVES

Start the game as usual and at any time press Start to pause. Now press Down and C simultaneously, Up, Left, Up, Right, Right, C. Now when you die you'll see that instead of 8 lives you'll have 99.







BRIAN LARA CRICKET

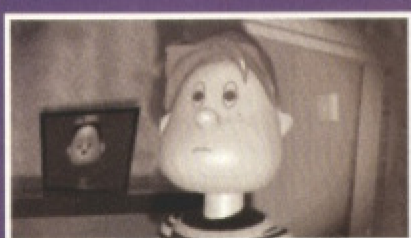
QUICK WICKETS

Thanks very much to Warren Miller from Eastbourne for letting us in on his secret technique for bowling a computer side out quickly. Choose two fast bowlers and set your field up on "Retreat" so that they are all around the boundary. Aim the ball so that it bounces very short and bowl alternately slow then fast balls. This encourages the batsmen to hook every time and, even though they'll get some sixes, you should get them out for under a hundred each innings. Howzat?

THEME PARK

SWAP RIDES

Try this tip from Matthew Macdonald in Andover if you want the kids to ride your tubing ride in go-karts and the speedway in rubber tubes. Once you've made a speedway or tubing ride and you've put the entrance in, turn the ride off. Now change the track to either speedway or tubing and turn it back on. Oh what fun!



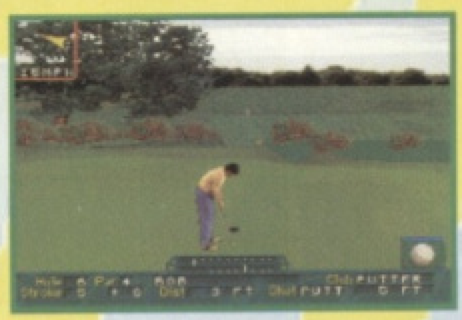



MEGADRIVE 32X

GOLF MAGAZINE'S 36 GREAT HOLES

GRAPHICS SCREEN

To get a secret screen where you can enlarge and shrink the objects in the game, go to the option screen and press the "Mode" button on the top of a six-button joypad. The screen appears and you can play around for no reason until you get bored.




COSMIC CARNAGE

SECRET GAME

Try this cheat to get a secret mode where the title of the game has changed to "Cyber Brawl" and there are subtle differences within the game as well. When you switch the machine on and the licence message comes up (produced by Sega...), press and hold X, B and Z. Keep them held and press Start to change the name to "Cyber Brawl".

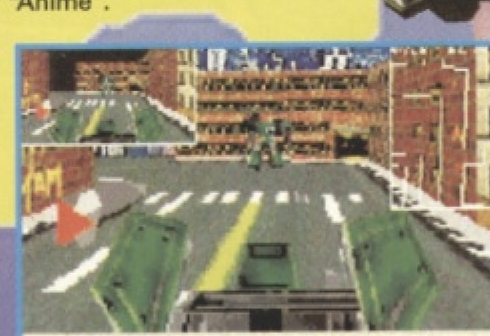




METAL HEAD

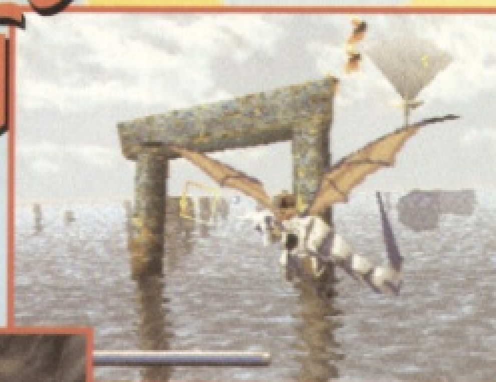
SECRET COMMANDER

This cheat lets you change your commander into an Anime style girl. Before you turn the machine on, press and hold A, B, C and Start. Keep them held until the title screen appears and then go to the options screen. Go to the commander option and go through until you get "Anime".



SATURN

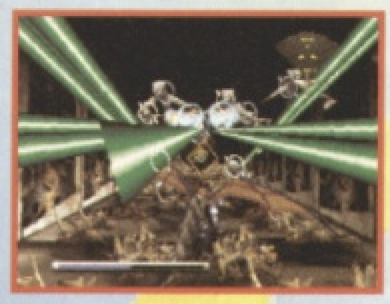


INVINCIBILITY, EPISODE ZERO AND SECRET START

INVINCIBILITY

To become so rock 'ard that nothing does any damage to you, go to the title screen and press Start to make the second title screen with "Normal Game" and "Options" on it appear. When you are on this screen, press L, L, R, R, Up, Down, Left, Right. You'll hear the sound of the dragon being hit and the words "Invincible Mode" will appear. The one down side with this cheat is that you can't get the best ending no matter what difficulty you're on.





SECRET START

This is a strange one. To have what looks like a woman in a red waistcoat appear at the start instead of the Sega logo man, go to the second title screen as before and press Up, X, Right, Y, Down, Z, Left, Y, Up, X. You'll hear the dragon get hit again and when you die and restart the mysterious lady in red will appear.

EPISODE ZERO

Thanks very much to Ray Aldridge from 'The Disk Box' in Chatham, Kent for this great cheat which lets you access the secret level. Go to the title screen as before and press Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, L button, R button. Also, when you finish the level you'll need to reset the machine.

CLOCKWORK KNIGHT





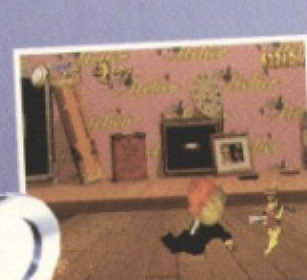
LEVEL SELECT

Gremlins got in the works last issue and the level select for CK somehow didn't get printed. Here it is again for all those who are having trouble. Go to the title screen with "Press Start Button" written on it and press Left, Up, Right, Down, Down, Right, Right, Up, R (the right-hand button on the top). "Betsy's Room" will appear on-screen and you can select other levels by pressing Up or Down.





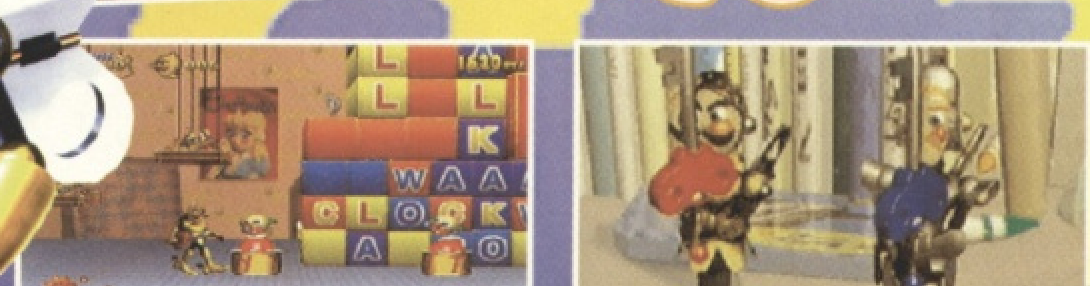












VIRTUA FIGHTER

BACKWARD FEET

Just in case you hadn't noticed, win a round as Kage and watch his feet closely during his victory pose. You'll see that they're on backwards! This also happens with some of the other characters. Odd or what? 32X owners will shortly be experiencing the pleasures of their own backwards foot fumbles – the glitches can be seen on the version of Virtua Fighter on that machine too.









MEGA CD

SPACE ACE

VIEW MODE

When playing the game, press Start to pause. Now press Right, Right, Left, Left, Down, Down, Up, Up, Start. The game will now play itself all the way through.

MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS

SKIP FIGHTS

If you're having trouble with the fight sequences (trouble staying awake more like), go to the difficulty select screen at the start of the game and press B, A, C, C, A, B, A. You'll hear a noise to let you know it has worked and you can now skip any fight by pressing Start when one begins.





THE MOVES GUIDE

KEY
HF : High Fierce (X)
LF : Low Fierce (A)
HQ : High Quick (Y)
LQ : Low Quick (B)

THE GOR

You should have your copy of Primal I ing for? Who knows you may even Whatever, this guide to the finest din give you the edge in any antediluvian the game creators: Time Warne

ARMADON

BED 'O NAILS: Hold HF/LQ
Press Down, Up

HORNICATION UPPERCUT: Hold HQ/HF/LQ
Press Down-towards, Towards, Up-towards

MEGA CHARGE: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Away, Down, Towards

SPINNING DEATH: Hold HQ/LF
Press Away, Towards, Down

FLYING SPIKES: Hold HF/LF
Press Away, Up

IRON MAIDEN: Hold HF/LQ
Press Away, Up, Towards

GUT GOUGER: Hold HQ/HF/LQ
Press Towards, Away (close range)

EAT HUMAN: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Up, Towards, Down

ARMADON FATALITIES

GUT FLING: Hold HQ/HF/LQ
Press Down, Down, Down, Down, Up

MEDITATION: Hold HQ/HF/LQ,LF
Press Towards, Down, Away, Towards, Towards





GENERAL TIPS

POWER MOVES
There are eight power moves per creature activated by pressing both High or both Low buttons together. These may use similar animations to the games regular moves, but have greater effect.
POWER MOVE POSITIONS:
STANDING
STANDING CLOSE
CROUCHING
IN-AIR

INSTANT SPECIALS
From the selectable menu you can choose to appoint special moves to the two unused buttons, Z and C.

ARMADON
Z — Bed 'o Nails
C — Iron Maiden

CHAOS
Z — Grab n Throw
C — Power Puke

SAURON
Z — Primal Scream
C — Earthquake Stop

BLIZZARD
Z — Mega Punch
C — Freeze Breath

DIABLO
Z — Torch
C — Hot Foot

DIABLO



FIREBALL (FAST): Hold HQ/LQ
Press Down, Towards

FIREBALL (SLOW): Hold HF/LF
Press Down, Towards

TORCH: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Up, Towards (Hold buttons to extend)

HOT FOOT: Hold HF/LF
Press Away-up, Down-towards

MEGA LUNGE: Hold HQ/LF
Press Away, Down, Towards

THE PULVERISER: Hold HQ/LF
Press Up, Towards, Down

EAT HUMAN: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Down, Up, Down

DIABLO FATALITIES

INCINERATOR: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Up-away, Down, Down-towards

FIREBALL: Hold HF/LQ/LF
Press Towards, Towards, Towards, Towards, Towards

RE GUIDE

l Rage by now — if not what are you wait- en have won the coin-op in our compo. nosaur acrobatics you can perform should n stand-off. All secrets come direct from ner Interactive and Probe Software.



SAURON



PRIMAL SCREAM: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Down, Up

STUN ROAR: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Away, Towards

EARTHQUAKE STOMP: Hold HQ/LF/LF
Press Up, Down

CRANIUM CRUSHER: Hold HQ/LF
Press Down, Up

LEAPING BONE BASH: Hold HF/LQ
Press Down, Up, Down

NECK THROW: Hold HF/LF
Press Towards, Away (in-close)

AIR THROW: Press HF/LF
(In air close to opponent)

EAT HUMAN: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Down, Down, Up

SAURON FATALITIES

FLESH EATING: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Down, Down, (then) Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Up, Up

CARNAGE: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Away, Towards, Away, Towards, Away

TALON
Z — Brainbasher
C — Pounce and flip

VERTIGO
Z — Voodoo Spell
C — Venom Spit

SECRET BOWLING GAME

This can be accessed in a two-player game by playing Armadon against Armadon. Get the two characters to perform the Rolling Death move together so they collide. Do this three times and be transported into a mini ten-pin round with humans acting as bowling pins.

SECRET OPTIONS

Primal Rage has a secret options menu that Time Warner has asked us to respect for another month. This menu gives you greater control over the game parameters, and access to later sections. Check next month's small tips for the access code.

CHAOS



POWER PUKE (FAST): Hold HQ/LF
Press Up, Towards

POWER PUKE (SLOW): Hold HF/LQ
Press Up, Towards

FART OF FURY: Hold HF/LQ
Press Down, Towards, Up, Away

GRAB-N-THROW: Hold HF/LF
Press Towards, Away (in-close)

GROUND SHAKER: Hold HF/LQ
Press Away, Away-up, Away-down

BATTERING RAM: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Towards, Towards

FLYING BUTT-SLAM: Hold HF/LF
Press Down, Towards, Up, Down-towards

EAT HUMAN: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Towards, Down, Away, Up

CHAOS FATALITIES

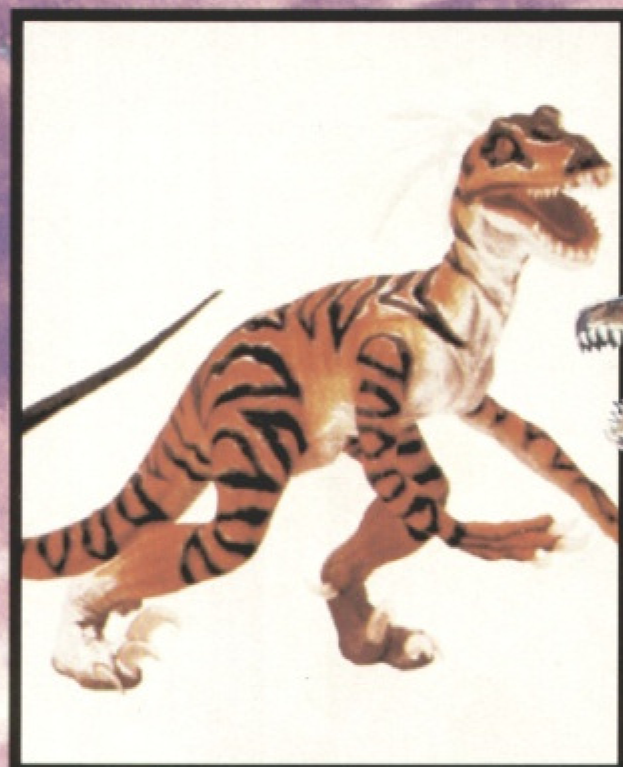
CANNONBALL: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Down, Towards, Up, Down-towards

GOLDEN SHOWER: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Down, Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF,
Press Away, Towards, Away, Towards

THE GORE GUIDE



TALON



RUN FORWARDS: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Towards

RUN BACKWARDS: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Away

FRANTIC FURY: Hold HQ/LF
Press Down, Towards (hold buttons during duration of move)

THE SLASHER: Hold HQ/LQ/LF
Press Down, Towards

BRAIN BASHER: Hold HF/LQ
Press Away, Up, Towards

THE FACE RIPPER: Hold HF/LF
Press Down, Towards (in-close)

POUNCE AND FLIP: Hold HF/LQ
Press Down, Towards, Down, Down-towards

JUGULAR BITE: Hold HF/LF
Press Away, Towards (in-close)

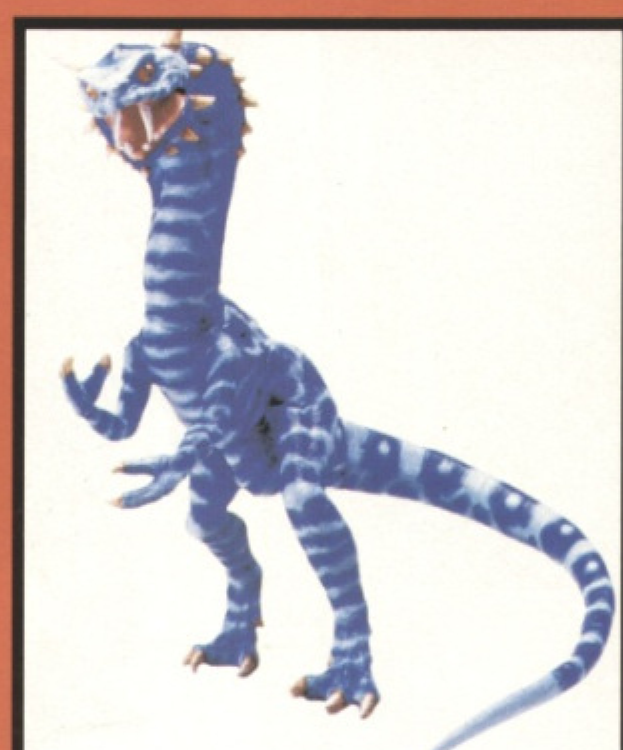
EAT HUMAN: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Towards, Down, Away

TALON FATALITIES

HEART WRENCHING: Hold HQ/LQ/LF
Press Towards, Down, Away, Up, Down

SHREDDING: Hold HQ/LF
Press Towards, Down, Away, Up, Towards

VERTIGO



TELEPORT: Hold HF/LF
Press Down, Down

COME SLITHER: Hold HQ/LQ
Press Away, Away

VENOM SPIT (SLOW): Hold HQ/LQ
Press Towards, Towards

VENOM SPIT (FAST): Hold HF/LF
Press Towards, Towards

SCORPION STING: Hold HF/LQ
Press Towards, Towards

HYPNOSIS: Hold HF/LQ
Press Away, Away (in-close)

EAT HUMAN: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Down, Towards, Up

VERTIGO FATALITIES

PETRIFY: Hold HF/LF
Press Away, Away, Away (then) Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Towards, Towards

SHRINK AND EAT: Hold HF/LF
Press Away, Away, Away (then) Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Down, Up

BLIZZARD



MEGA PUNCH (SHORT): Hold HQ/LQ
Press Away, Towards

MEGA PUNCH (LONG): Hold HF/LF
Press Away, Towards

MEGA PUNCH (QUICK): Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Away, Towards

MEGA PUNCH (FAKE): Hold HQ/LQ
Press Down, Up

PUNCHING BAG: Hold HQ/LF
Press Towards, Down, Away, Up (in-close)
Tap HQ repeatedly to punch or HF/LQ/LF to uppercut.

AIR THROW: Press HF/LQ in air close to opponent

THROW: Hold HF/LQ
Press Towards, Down, Away, Up (in-close)

FREEZE BREATH: Hold HQ/HF/LF
Press Away, Towards

ICE GEYSER: Hold HQ/HF/LF
Press Down, Up

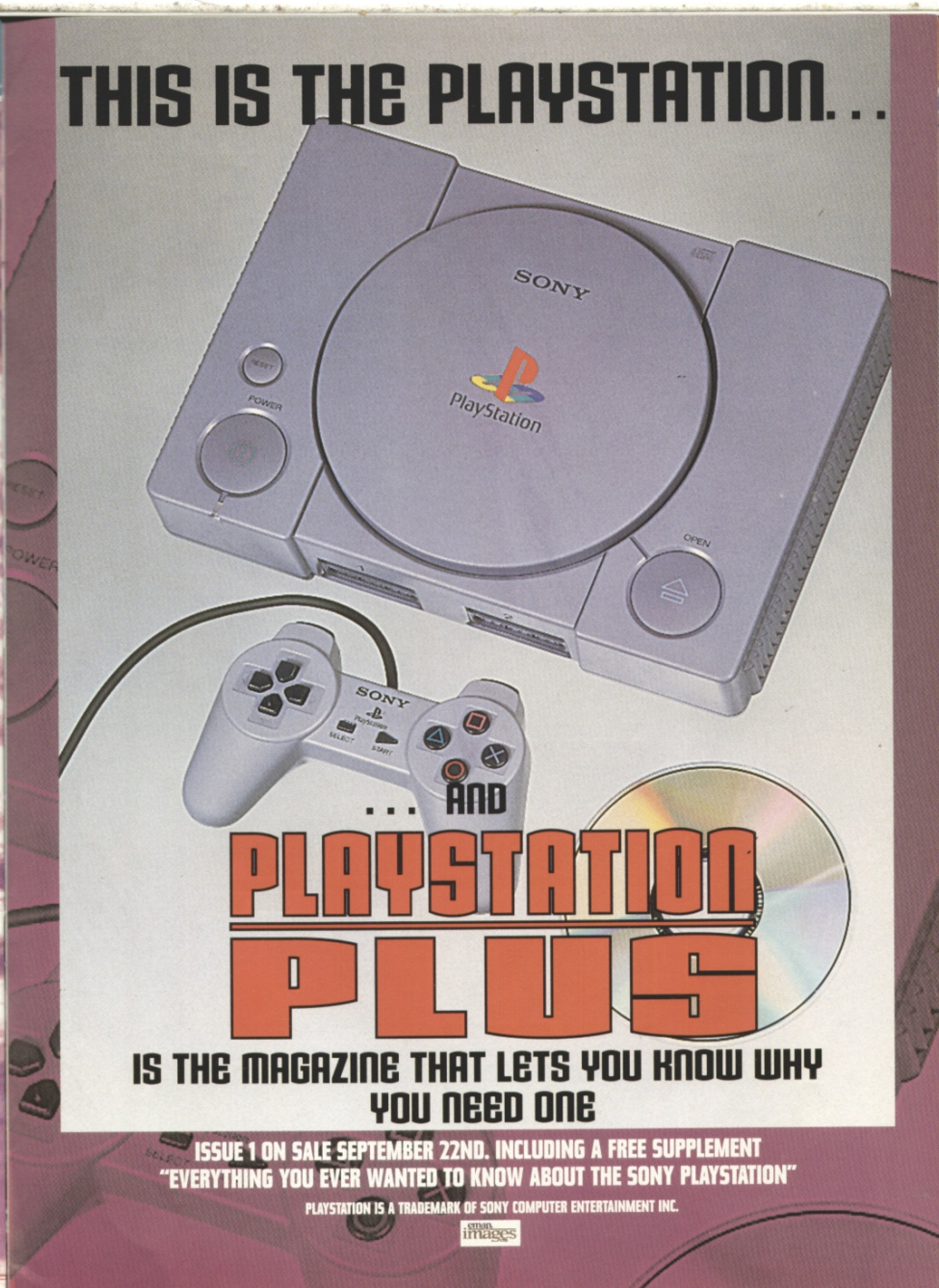
EAT HUMAN: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Away, Up, Towards, Down

BLIZZARD FATALITIES

BRAIN BASH: Hold HQ/HF/LF
Press Down, Down, Away, Up, Towards

TO-DA-MOON: Hold HQ/HF/LQ/LF
Press Down, Down, Down, Down, Up

That about wraps Tips up for this month, but next issue's section will be even bigger with a guide to Treasure's excellent Light Crusader.



THIS IS THE PLAYSTATION...
SONY
PlayStation
RESET
POWER
OPEN
SONY
SELECT
START
... AND
PLAYSTATION PLUS
IS THE MAGAZINE THAT LETS YOU KNOW WHY YOU NEED ONE
ISSUE 1 ON SALE SEPTEMBER 22ND. INCLUDING A FREE SUPPLEMENT
"EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SONY PLAYSTATION"
PLAYSTATION IS A TRADEMARK OF SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT INC.
emap. images

VECT



BY BLUE SKY/SEGA

RELEASE OCTOBER

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE SHOOT 'EM UP

1 PLAYERS

24 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
NO

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

State of the art frenzied platform fun.

GAME AIM

Free the polluted Earth of the future from tyranny by jumping off tall things and shooting some stuff.

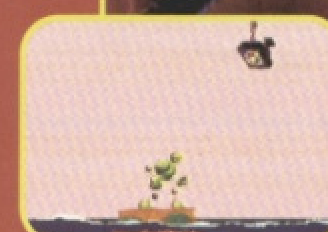
BEAT THIS

Finish level 5.

Earth in the year 2049 is not pleasant. In fact, it sucks. Literally sick to death of toxic sludge, the remaining members of humanity have scarpered to the stars and left mechanical slaves behind to clean up the mess. Unfortunately, one of these clockwork janitors gets a bit too big for his diodes and assumes control of the other mechanical slaves. Before long, the 'WarHead' droid is kicking butt on planet Earth and preparing various unpleasantries for the soon-to-return humans. He hasn't, however, counted on the lowly VectorMan – a robot who returns from a sludge-dumping mission in space to discover that things at home have taken something of a turn for the worse. He single-handedly takes on WarHead in order to return peace to the planet before the humans return.

VectorMan is a traditional game in hi-tech clothing, and represents a significant step forward from Blue Sky's previous efforts, Roadrunner and Demolition Derby. Steering a Michelin Man lookalike through dystopian futuristic scaffolding and several scuba-diving missions may not sound the most appealing prospect, but the fate of Earth lies in the balance and duty calls...

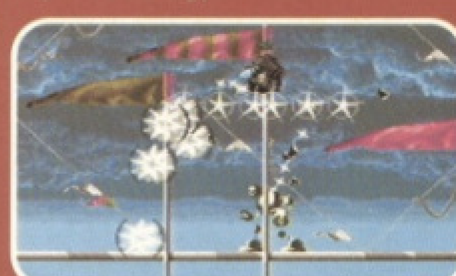




SPRITES A GO GO

SPACEPORT SHOOT OUT

The game opens with a sprawling battle across a giant flying spaceport. The level introduces you to a range of foes and VectorMan's various combat facilities. Shoot the suspended television sets for hidden power-ups and extra weapons and pick up the floating pods left behind by destroyed droids to replenish energy.

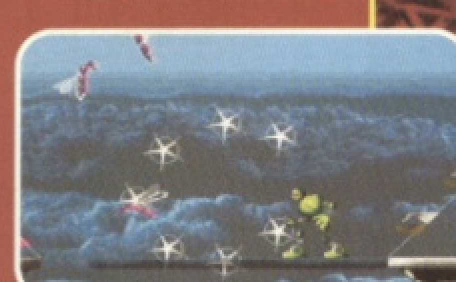




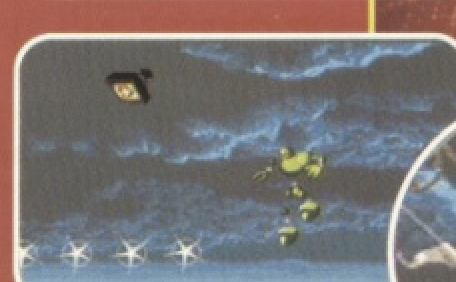






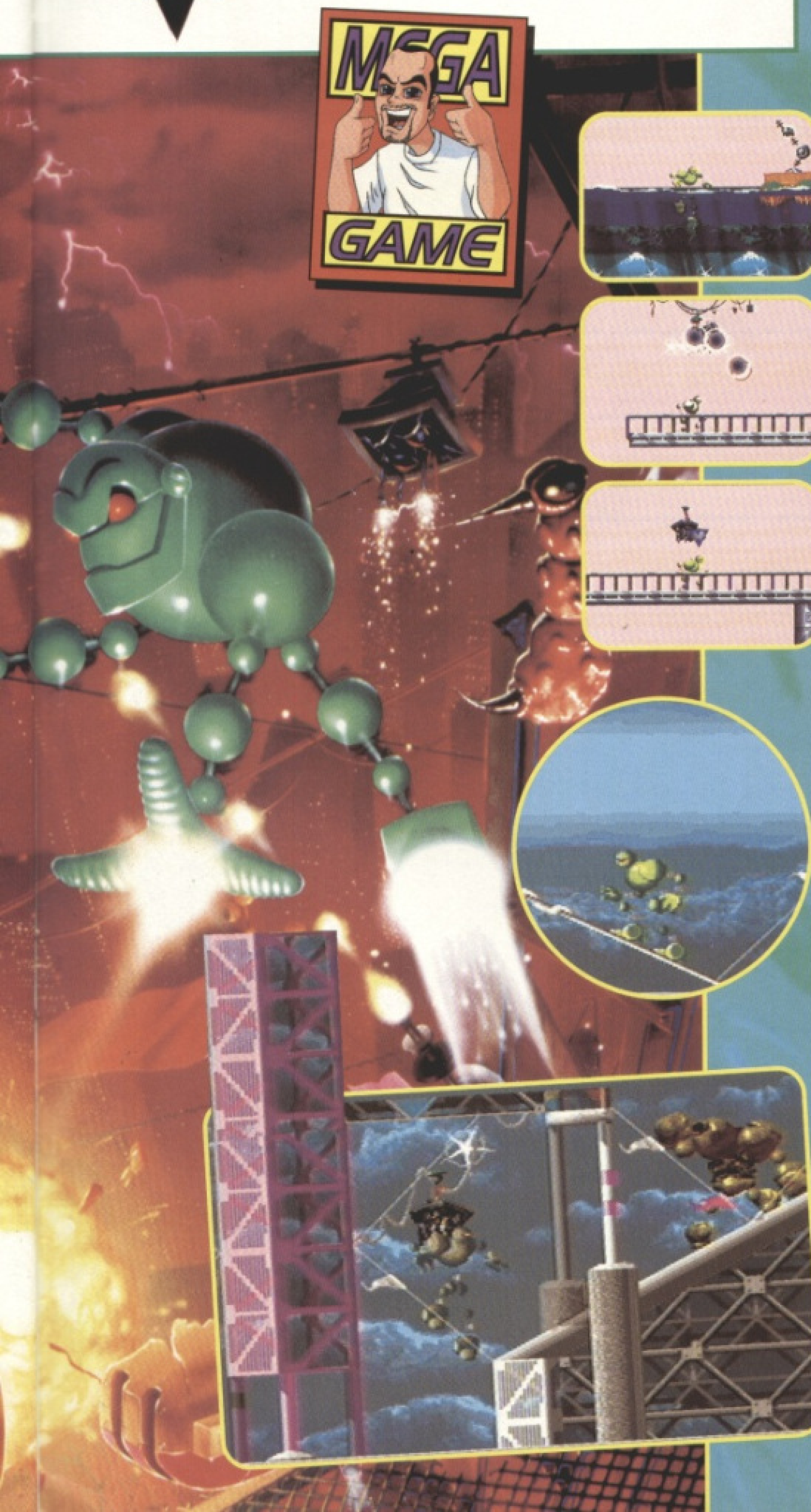








TORMAN



DUMPORAMA

The spaceport level culminates with a fall into a giant metallic pit which turns out to be a landing site for a huge bomber plane. Dodge its dumping payload while shooting up through its open cargo doors.



TRAIN TROUBLE

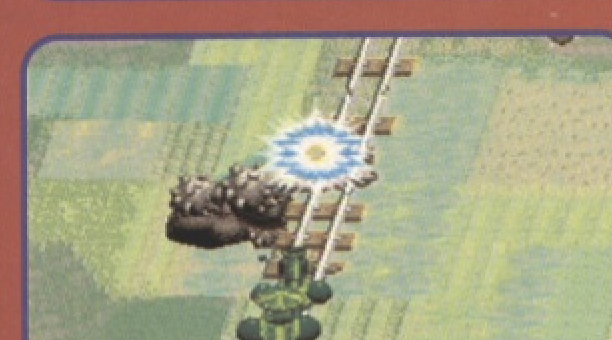
An early mini-level sees VectorMan transformed into a small green train that fires explosive shells from its chimney. Running on a track suspended high above the ground you must shoot the marauding boss droid whilst jumping over its hands as they grab at you from below. Several different perspectives give you an aerial view of the action.



Dodge the big guy as his huge hands grab you from underneath.



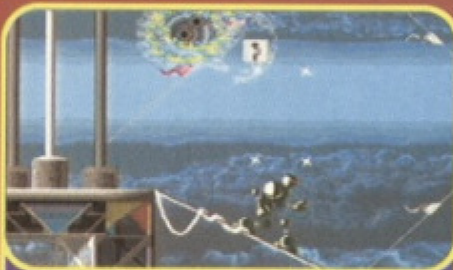
Make tracks while your foe is between leaps.



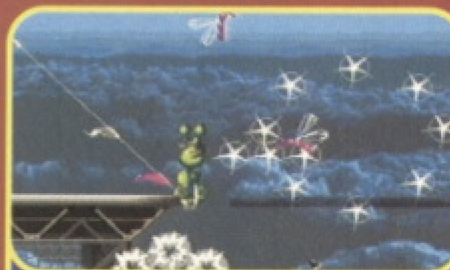
Scupper his handiwork with an explosive emission from your big chimney.

STRAP ON FUN

Television sets secrete numerous handy add-ons for VectorMan to discover on his travels. These vary from additional firepower to objects which can literally transform VectorMan's body onto a powerful drill or a ticking time bomb. When strategically placed, these drills and bombs can open up previously unseen sections of the game like underground caverns. The firepower comes in generally useful for finding ever more spectacular ways to blow your opponents away.



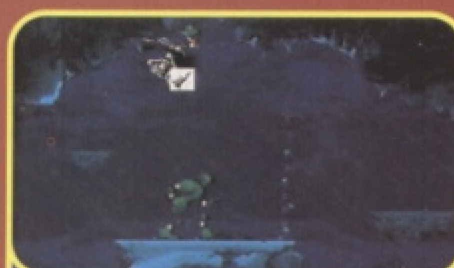
The drill icon is revealed behind a pranged television.



Spin through the platform surface.



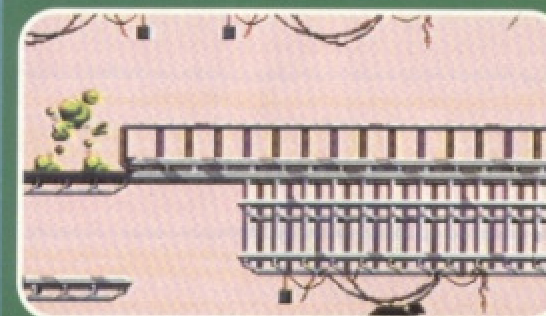
Drill between undersea mines with reckless abandon.

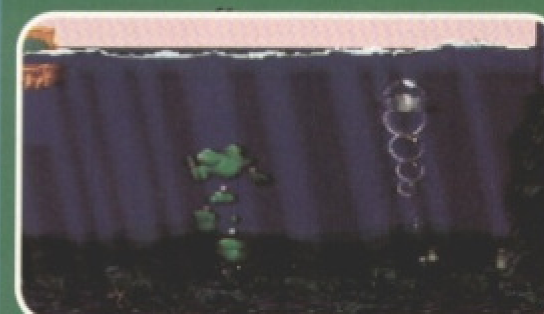


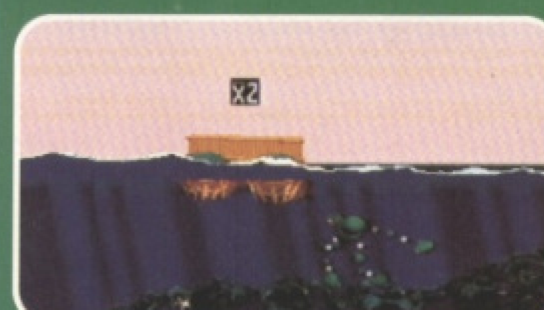
Grab this icon to break through ceilings.

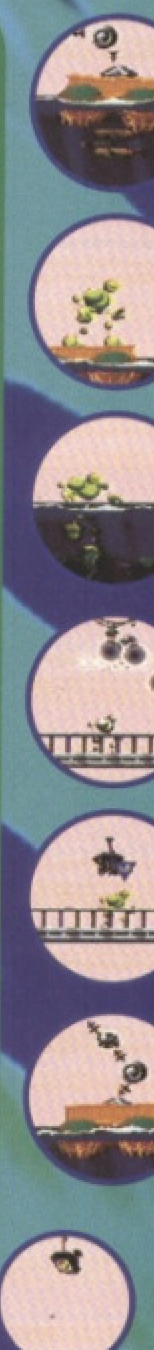
OCEAN MOTION

Floating atolls, the sea bed and secret underground tunnels are the scenarios for the Ocean Shelf level. Watch out for floating gun platforms, underwater mines and steel traps.





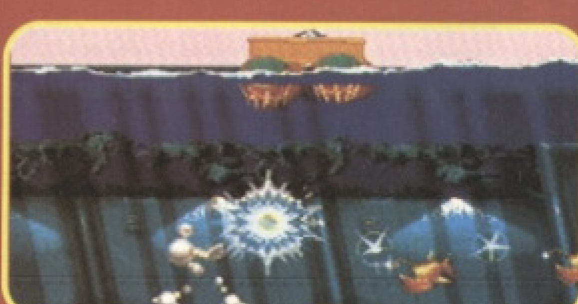






GOING UNDERGROUND

The drill facility is essential on this level to gain forced entry into the underground tunnels.







FISH SUPPER

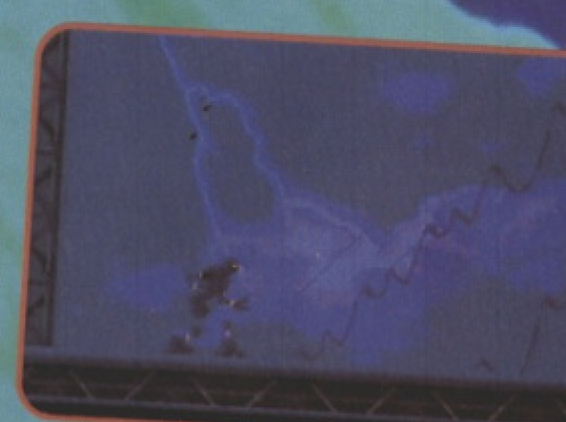
One of the most graceful power-up transformations momentarily turns VectorMan into a metallic frog which can scale the depths to reach the surface. Use this to sidestep troublesome areas and simply save time.



Grab the fish icon and witness a graceful transformation into...



...a breaststroking frog which can swim through platforms.





COMMENT



GUS

VectorMan looks set to be the next big 16bit platformer, and its sprite-linked graphics alone are impressive enough to make it deserving of a strong reputation. The only thing in danger of letting the side down is the lack of variety. OK, you can dance around a load of platforms, jump off a load of platforms and then swim around a load of platforms, but you're engaged in pretty linear tasks right the way down the line. Having said that, nice touches like the incredible television sets and the overall feel of the game go some way towards smoothing over the cracks in the rather unadventurous structure. The look and the feel of this game mean it deserves the title state of the art, it's just a shame it doesn't stretch you, or itself, a bit further.

COMMENT



MARCUS

This is pretty smart in just about every sense. Visually, it has a detail and fluidity unusual to Megadrive games, while gameplay is satisfyingly fast and explosive. VectorMan himself is one of the most impressive aspects of the whole caboodle – a constantly moving collection of spheres loosely assembled into a humanoid shape. Gasp as he manoeuvres himself into any firing position! Marvel at his multi-jointed limbs which can adapt to any terrain! Groan as once again he gets blown into very small pieces which scatter across the screen!
This is top quality stuff with just the right blend of fiddly platform fun and mindless violence. All of which goes to show that writing off 16bit gaming is very short-sighted indeed.





GOING APE

Emerge from the the underwater cavern to finish off the level boss. Or, as is more likely, get disassembled piece by piece and spread over a large area in a highly confrontational manner.



The opening shot in what is destined to become a heated debate.



He shoots! He scores! He leaps around in a slightly prissy manner!

WATERY WORLD

The undersea kingdom holds thrills and spills galore for VectorMan who adapts, Stingray-style, to his surroundings. Travel upwards, avoiding piranha fish and undersea mines, to reach the surface.









GRAPHICS 90

▲ Fluttering flags and light refractions in water are just some of the details on show.

ANIMATION 90

▲ Detailed and showy, with some excellent effects and fluid movement.

MUSIC 88

▲ A pulsing kick-up-the-Orb groove.

EFFECTS 86

▲ Elements from the intro sequence turn up in some impressive prangs later on. Exploding TV sets are always fun.

PLAYABILITY 91

▲ Very easy to get into and difficult to stop.

LASTABILITY 88

▼ Some of the later levels seem a bit samey as the game progresses.

OVERALL

An excellent showcase for the best in Megadrive graphics and gameplay.

90

Theme

BY BULLFROG

RELEASE OCTOBER | **PRICE** TBA

GAME TYPE SIM

BREAK DOWN

1 PLAYERS

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
OKAY

ORIGIN

This conversion of Theme Park is very close to the 3DO version. It's Bullfrog's first business sim.

GAME AIM

Create an amusement paradise: make money, keep punters happy, win awards.

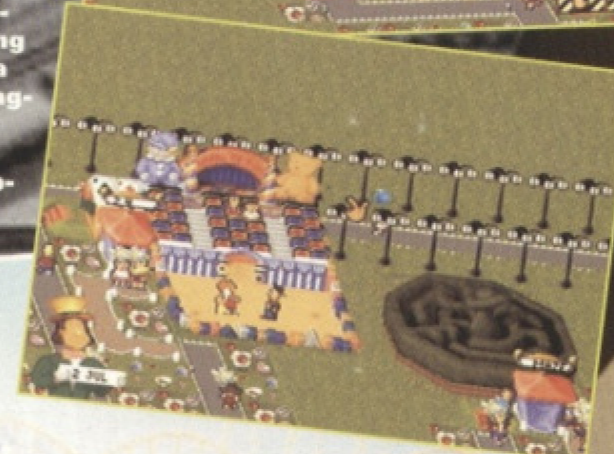
BEAT THIS

???????

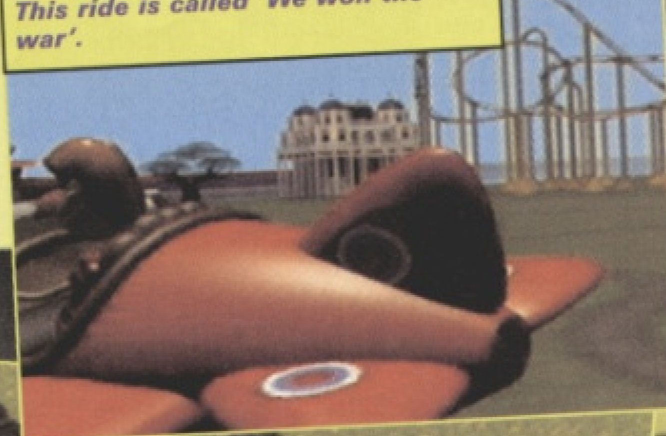
Theme Park's are being spawned across the globe. Theoretically, there could be so many of these surreal kingdoms of entertainment that they occupy more space than the 'real world'. Everyone will travel to work in a green plastic caterpillar, and it will be chips for tea every night...

And where there's fun and tinsel, there's chocolate coins to be made. Bullfrog should be minting some more off the back of Saturn Theme Park, a conversion that comes just months after the magnificent Megadrive cart. This time there is not snipped features, or cut corners. Every puking sound effect, fancy graphic, every sweetie wrapper is there for your delictation.








This ride is called 'We won the war'.



The trees are pretty, offer toilet facilities and a place for rumpo.

COMMENT


MARCUS

There are some who think that games like Theme Park should be the sole preserve of PCs. Not at all, proved by this elegant Saturn version, which is the easiest Theme Park to get around yet. From my point of view I wanted to know how it compared to the Megadrive version. Well to casual absservers, the differences seem to be mainly graphical — which is a testament to the awesome level of the 16bit conversion, but at the same time there is disappointment that Bullfrog didn't add any noticeable first time 'tricks' (especially when we hear the Playstation version is due some). But this doesn't take into account the speed, share options and rendered clips that this version offers. Bearing in mind that most Theme Park players are fanatics and purist, they couldn't possibly sit out this 32bit version, supersmooth as it is.

MALLED TO DEATH

As before, Theme Park features the same vast array of rides and shop units. Fill your park with these to attract the punters, then rack up the prices to make a return on your investment. The more expensive units come later, after your development team come up with bigger attractions.



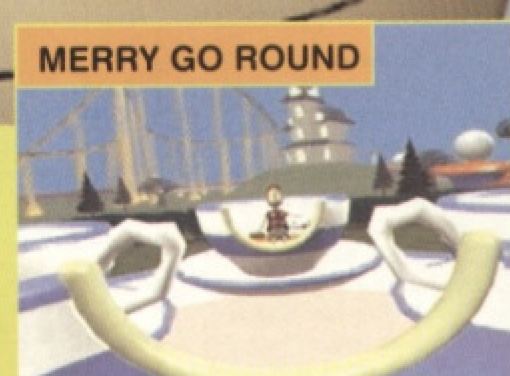
SNEAKY PEAK

The mini-movies are a neat way of seeing the Theme Park from your punters' eyes. Many of the rides have a film strip icon that enters you into a rendered sequence showing the ride. These are an impressive presentational feature, but don't have much bearing on actual gameplay.

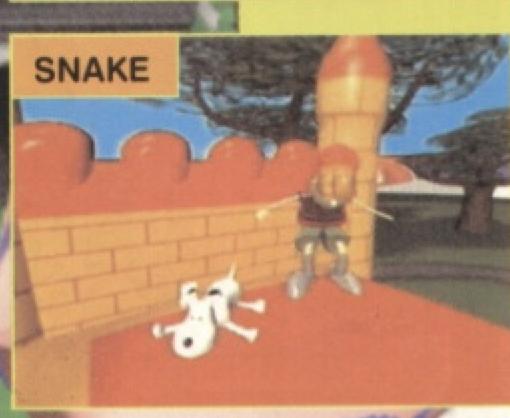
MAZE



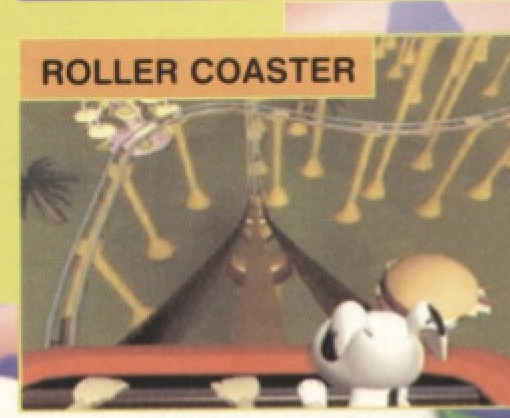
MERRY GO ROUND



SNAKE

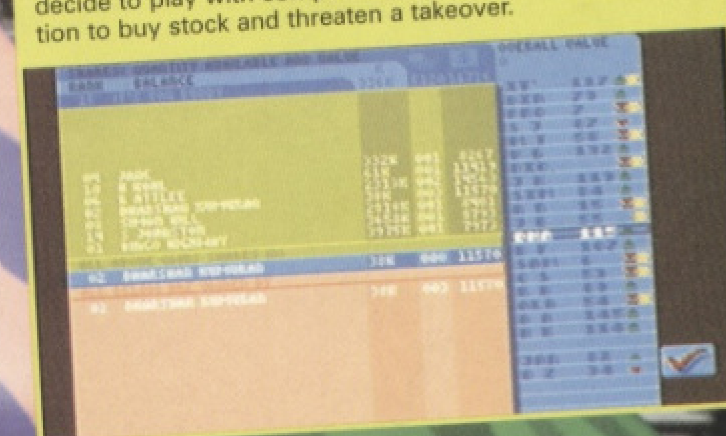


ROLLER COASTER



PLAYING FOOTSIE

A feature missing from the Megadrive but restored to the Saturn is the stocks and shares screen. This is available in the full version of the game (the most difficult). It allows you to purchase stock in your competitors park, with the aim of making money from their success. However, if you decide to play with competitors, they are also in the position to buy stock and threaten a takeover.





Coils of fun in this corner.

SHELF LIVES

The return of the stock ordering system to Theme Park is a mixed blessing. This feature, ommitted from the Megadrive game, involves replacing the fries, cokes, lollies etc. from your food stalls, when they begin to run out. A diagramatic warehouse shows your supplies. Thankfully, this repetitive chore is only necessary on the full game, and the warehouse capacity has been increased to make it less frequent.





For some reason Claire's got a cob on.





Control tools even a simpleton and the Mega Power reader can use.

NEW FACES

You hire and fire staff to keep your staff functioning, and the workers on the Saturn version are just as bolshy as those previously. However, this 32bit version features more faces than the 16bit, which had just a single entertainer. Now you are able to hire different types of entertainer and assess their effect on visitors.



CAN'T FACE LOSING YOU

The nastiest feature of the Megadrive game was the lack of a save option. There are five on the Saturn, and with a RAM cart the potential is unlimited. Loading and saving is extremely easy, too.

COMMENT



GUS

Theme Park is an extremely fine game, and this version maintains the standard as you'd expect, replacing some of the features the Megadrive sensibly left out. But there's a slight feeling of anti-climax in Bullfrog failing to add anything to an existing game for its Saturn release. True, many other PC and 3DO games will arrive on the system without enhancements, but it would have been gratifying for Sega owners to have some new perspective on the game, which is a year and a half old. Moaning aside, this is the fastest and most controllable Theme Park yet, wisely keeping the simplified icons, and easy to follow sub menus. And the core game is as fun and absorbing as ever, with the movie clips a frivolous but welcome addition. If you have a Saturn, don't have this on the Megadrive, and want something more substantial than the likes of Panzer Dragoon, make your way to the turnstile.

GRAPHICS 82

▲Bright, gaudy, brash. Just like your average Theme Park.

▼No new perspectives or features.

ANIMATION 85

▲The game handles an incredible amount of animated sprites at one time.

MUSIC 74

▲Very fitting.

▼Fitting means ear-wrenching, key-hopping organ-ground ditties.

EFFECTS 86

▲A mixture of background crowd and spot effects that aims to create an atmosphere and succeeds.

PLAYABILITY 90

▲The game's great asset is the freedom it offers: its one big puzzle that you set yourself.

▼There is a lack of direct control that won't suit some.

LASTABILITY 89

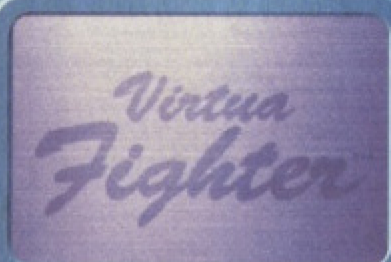
▲There is effectively no 'end', only further development, but there is a competitive element and a save function.

OVERALL

Theme Park as it was and is, with its small flaws and great qualities. We can't argue with that.

90

Virtua Fighter



BY: SEGA

RELEASE: NOVEMBER

PRICE: TBA

GAME TYPE: BEAT 'EM UP

1-2 PLAYERS

32 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
AVERAGE

CONTINUES
YES

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
WELL SWIFT

ORIGIN

The Saturn's acclaimed coin-op conversion adapted for its 32bit little brother.

GAME AIM

A cunning test of strategy, brawn and fighting technique in a one-on-one battle for martial arts supremecy. But you knew that.

BEAT THIS

Kick Dural's butt.

Pity the poor 32X. This fungal-like attachment to the trusty megadrive promises much, but has been sold out over and over again by sparse support and dodgy games.

The eagerly awaited appearance of Virtua Fighter, however, could mean 32X owners may yet have the last laugh.

For the benefit of those who've spent the last year colonising alien planets, Virtua Fighter is the coin-op that rewrote the rule book when it came to beat 'em ups. Revolving perspectives literally added a whole new dimension to gameplay leaving the likes of Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat looking, well, a little flat. An impressive Saturn conversion was entrusted with the responsibility of selling the public on the machine and, despite a few rough edges, it was damned impressive. Sega have now taken the admirable move of bringing the Virtua Fighter experience to 32X owners. AM2's conversion of the game for the magic mushroom is inevitably going to invite unfair comparisons (unfair, because although the 32X is a fully fledged 32bit machine it employs much less sophisticated hardware than the Saturn) but they've done the business in fine style.

All of which is good news for existing 32X owners, and those considering investing in a machine – we can apparently expect to see the game bundled with the 32X at £150 soon...





ACTION REPLAY

The 32X gets one up on the Saturn at last with the chance to view your crushing victory/humiliating slaughter from the angle of your choice. It's especially entertaining to check out the soles of your competitors's feet. Suspiciously clean we reckon...



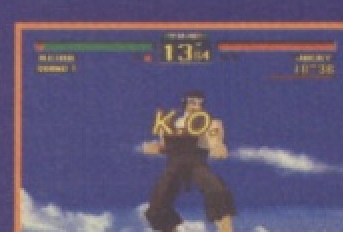
Toe-cheese examination virtual viewpoint.



Shoulder hair examination virtual viewpoint.



Dandruff examination virtual viewpoint.



Open-fly examination virtual viewpoint.





PSEUDO SATURN

One area where this version of Virtua Fighter is identical to its bigger brother is the intro sequence.







COMMENT



MARCUS

Virtua Fighter. What can I say? One of the milestones in gaming has survived the 32X experience with its dignity intact. OK, so the rough edges of the Saturn version just got a bit rougher, but it's pretty pointless comparing this with the performance of a machine that checks in at around £400. Sega have clearly cut their cloth with the 32X version, preserving as much as they can in some areas and adding new features to make up for the deficiencies. The multi-angle replays are impressive and the tournament option could add a whole new dimension to any fondue evening. Best of all, however, is the chance to dress your favourite hard man in shocking pink or a delicate shade of mauve. What more could you ask for?

In short, this is a must for 32X owners and leaves the likes of Cosmic Carnage not so much standing, but lying in a bloody heap.

COMMENT



GUS

No one with a 32X can seriously have anything on their mind except this game. We can tell you that Sega and AM2 have not let you down. This is a superb conversion, as good as anyone here dared hope, and more importantly bound to go down a storm with owners who have had a pretty lean year. The game captures the spirit of the coin-op, not to mention its speed and smoothness. The graphics are more than satisfactory. almost matching those of the Saturn, and Sega have been shrewd by including exclusive features, such as the replay modes. This has to be the 32X game of the year, and the promise of better things.





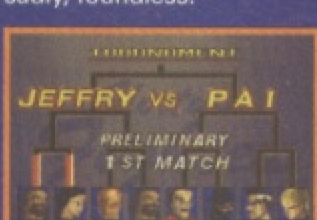






NEW TRICKS

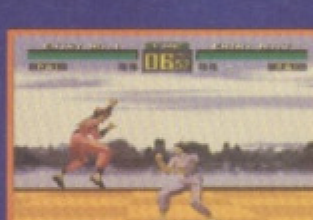
Tournament mode sets up a Premier Division of butt-kicking with the characters of your choice. As if the chance to watch Jeffry slapping himself about wasn't enough fun, you can change your characters' costumes. Sarah looks especially fetching in a bikini top, or what about a nice summer outfit for Wolf? Might cheer him up a bit. Rumours of an 'Akira rah-rah skirt cheat' are, sadly, foundless.



The Virtua Fighter Vauxhall Conference League.



Sarah struts her stuff on the Sega catwalk.



It's handbags at dawn in the Virtua bitch fight.

GRAPHICS — 91

▲Clearly less sophisticated than the original Saturn game, but the finest the 32X has to offer.

ANIMATION — 94

▲Incredibly smooth, and especially impressive on the new replay facility.

MUSIC — 81

▼Sounds like the Saturn soundtrack played on a Stylophone.

EFFECTS — 85

▼Sound has suffered in the conversion process, but the necessary prang effects are all here.

PLAYABILITY — 93

▲This game is the ultimate beat 'em up on any system, and the gameplay is pretty much intact.

LASTABILITY — 93

▲Just try to turn it off. Go on.

OVERALL

Rough around the edges, but gameplay is still unsurpassed. An essential purchase.

93

BLACKTHORNE

BY: INTERPLAY

RELEASE: OCTOBER

PRICE: TBA

GAME TYPE: PLATFORM

1 PLAYERS

24 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
PASSWORD

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
VERY NICE

ORIGIN

Converted by Interplay from their SNES game Blackthorne, and reminscent of the classic Flashback.

GAME AIM

Assault Sarlac's forces, seize the light-stone and avenge your father by shootin' and jumpin' all the way!

BEAT THIS

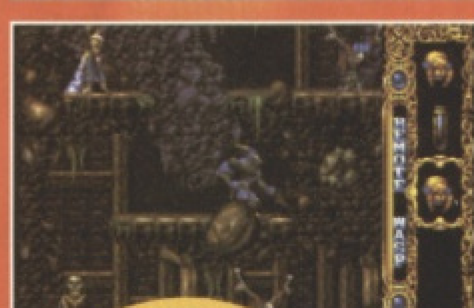
ICE LEVELS

The people of the planet Tuul must have impeccably bad taste. For starters they called the planet Tuul. Then they preceded to give themselves names like 'Sarlac' and 'Vlaros'. Not the kind of place to feature in the intergalactic tourist guide. On this god-forsaken rock, Sarlac is the local Bond baddie, and he successfully launched a surprise attack on your good tribe some twenty years ago, when you were but a princeling. Even as the palace burned, the king's arch mage zapped you off to the safety of Earth, where you lived as a drifter, hitcher and general good for nothing (so Rad Automatic must be the Princess Betharda of Calamester, then?). Meanwhile Sarlac seizes the mystical light-stone and uses your villagers as footstools and pencil cases.
Now you are returning to Tuul to liberate your people from a slave regime even Lord Emap couldn't comprehend – using the trusty instruments of truth and justice (ie guns, bombs and projectiles).







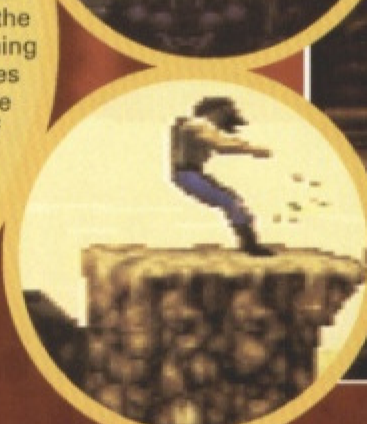












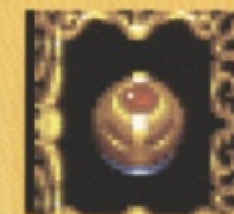
TAKE A RUNNING JUMP

Your hero is a versatile, full of beans type, rather like that geezer from Delphine's Flashback, and the hero of Prince of Persia. He spends his time running along corridors, jumping chasms and sometimes even doing both at once (now that's clever). He can haul himself up on to platforms, grab cliff edges and press himself against the wall to dodge enemy fire. At your command he will arm his weapon in preparation, though this inhibits his other movements





ACKTHORNE



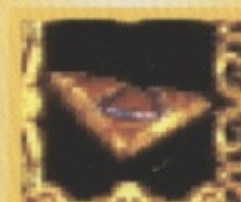
HOVER BOMB
Floating incendiary – explodes on contact.



REMOTE WASP
Remote controlled detonation device



BRIDGE KEY
Activates the laser bridges on some levels. One model fits all.



ELEVATOR
Portable device using anti-grav technology.



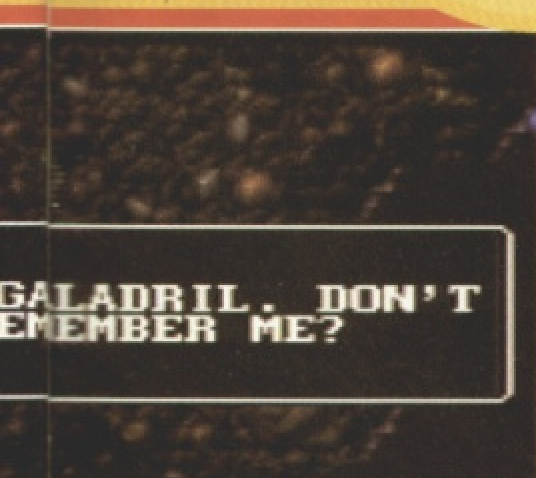
POTION
Health restorative often held by prisoners.

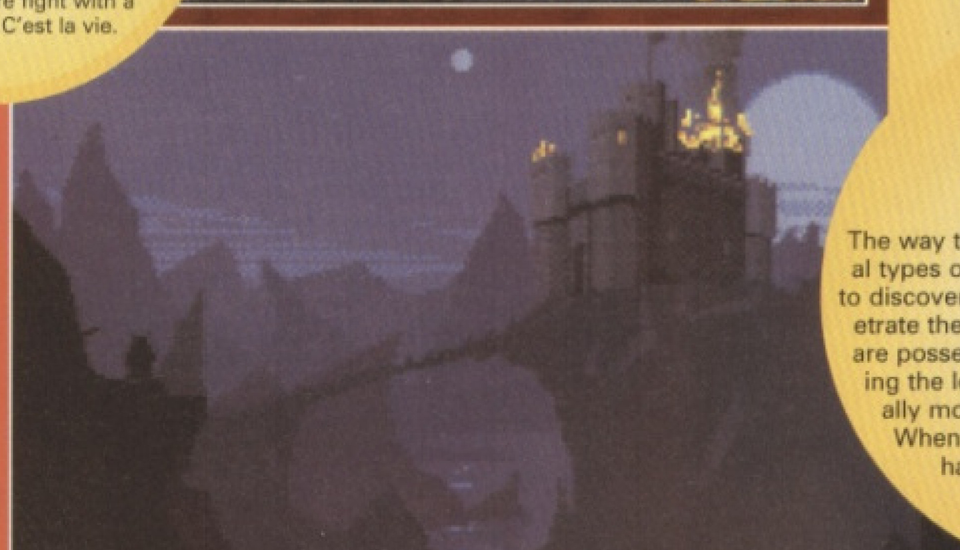




CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

The route to Sarlac's fortress is littered with shambling wrecks and wretched captives. Amongst the corpses are prisoners chained to the wall. Some may offer useful advice, but it's all too easy to catch them in the crossfire when you get into a fire fight with a tooled-up orc. C'est la vie.





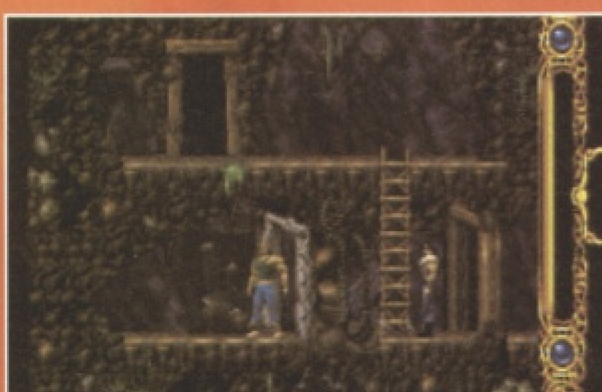
TAKE AS YOU FIND

The way to the fortress is blocked by several types of security mechanism. You'll have to discover the objects that allow you to penetrate them. The snag is that most of them are possessed by the armed guards parading the levels. A bullet in the skull is usually more effective than a polite word. When you get the objects, you then have to figure out their use.

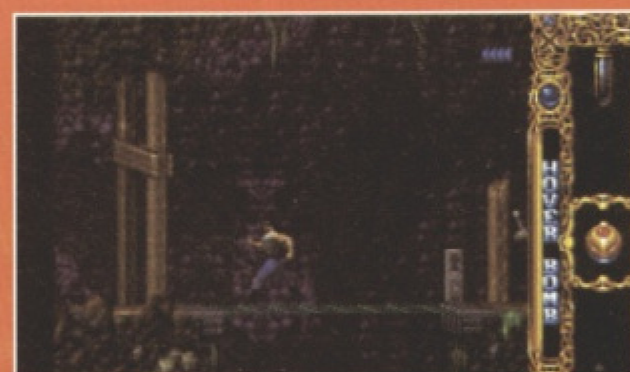
THE CRYSTAL MAZE

In addition to object puzzles, there are a variety of impediments and traps for you to overcome. Robot guns are lowered from the ceiling when pressure pads are activated, lift mechanisms have to be operated and secret doors behind waterfalls should not be missed.





Let my people go, yeah, yeah, yeah. Let my people go.





Snow is falling. all around me, monsters dying, having fun.





COMMENT



MARCUS

Interplay have taken an established idea and created a slick interpretation of it. Blackthorne won't be winning the 32X any prizes for graphics or sound, as both are accomplished but hardly ground-breaking. Its best achievement is some absorbing and taxing gameplay, as you explore a huge amount of levels which explains the large size of the cart.

COMMENT



GUS

Good game! Good game! – as Brucie would say. Blackthorne is an accomplished little number that looks quite sharp (well by 16bit standards) and plays really nicely. Let's put aside all the 'what the 32X should be capable of doing' argument and see what Blackthorne offers. The gameplay is absorbing, and the area covered by the game is huge. The character control feels good on the whole, although there's a nasty unreliabilty about object selection that sometimes leads to unwanted jumps. The graphics are fine, with animation faring even better. Only the music is a positive irritation. What you might think is that Blackthorne is not that much better than Flashback in style and content, which is after all two years old. Maybe this is so, but this is amongst the 32X's most enjoyable games, and it wont be coming out on the Megadrive.

GRAPHICS 87

▲Very crisp, with backgrounds getting better as you progress.
▼Little graphic variation within each zone.

ANIMATION 88

▲You move fluidly and purposefully. The other characters have lovely touches.

MUSIC 59

▼Gets very annoying very quickly as it repeats continuously.

EFFECTS 78

▲Good gun noises and the odd sample.
▼More ambient background effects would have added to the game.

PLAYABILITY 89

▲Very nice learning curve and well constructed gameplay make it crucially absorbing.

LASTABILITY 85

▲Each level get progressively tougher and more complex.
▼The content of the game stays pretty much the same throughout.

OVERALL

A powerful mixture of explora-shoot 'em up that doesn't scream 32bit-ability, but oozes playability.

80


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BY APACHE

RELEASE TBA

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE PUZZLE

1 PLAYERS

16 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
YES

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
UNFRIENDLY

ORIGIN

The cute cartoon character gets a devilishly difficult game of his own.

GAME AIM

Escape from the circus, navigating your elephant friend to safety and locating your errant children on the way.

BEAT THIS

Complete level 3.



Looks can be decieving. Take Marsupilami the marsupial, for instance. Even when caged and exploited by cruel circus-owners, the chirpy chappie maintains a cheesy grin and a cheeky disposition. One day, however, the worm turns and decides to lead his own animal liberation front. In an attempt to get back to his wife and three children Marsupilami breaks out of captivity, using his lethal whip-like tail to negotiate obstacles and subjugate the fat ringkeepers.

No worries, then. Well, no worries except for Bonelli, Marsupilami's lumbering elephant friend. The two break out together, and while Bonelli isn't exactly the brains of the outfit, he comes in useful for dousing fires with his trunk or simply battering into troublesome objects. Unfortunately, he's also one can short of a six pack and needs escorting everywhere. Marsupilami only has his friend, Tignass the hummingbird, to help him escape the circus, guide Bonelli's every step and locate his errant three children before he can return home to his wife.

The scene is set for a bizarre dash against the clock as Marsupilami, Bonelli and Tignass take their faltering steps to freedom with only the marsupial's multi-purpose tail for protection.



BOTTOMS UP

WINCH

To use Marsupilami's winch facility, drop some food where you'd like Bonelli to position himself. While he's munching away, activate your tail exactly over his head and watch your little fat buddy fly. All a bit far-fetched really.



POLE VAULT

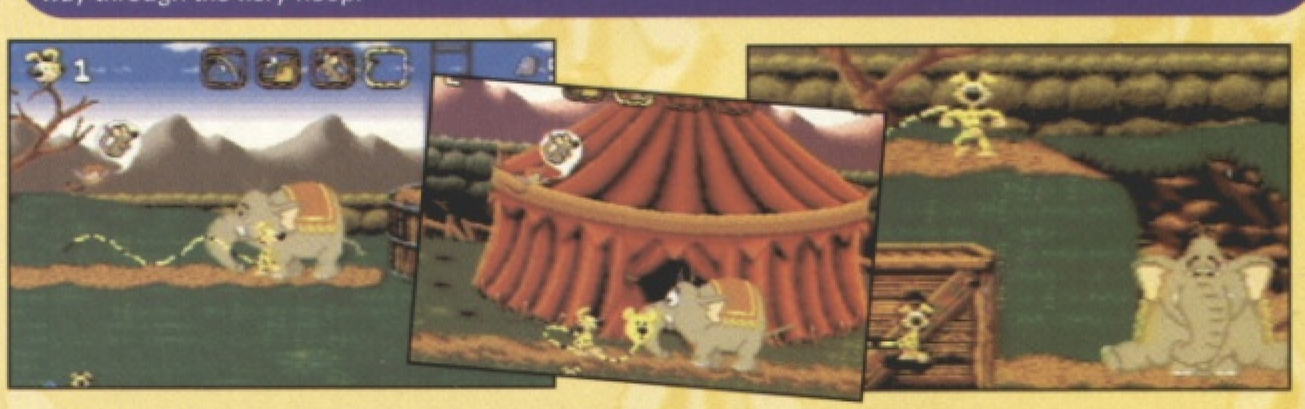
Although the various tailspins include a parachute, a lever and a hammer, perhaps the most spectacular is the pole vault function which, when activated at the right time, launches Marsupilami across rivers and other gaps. When you get to the other side,

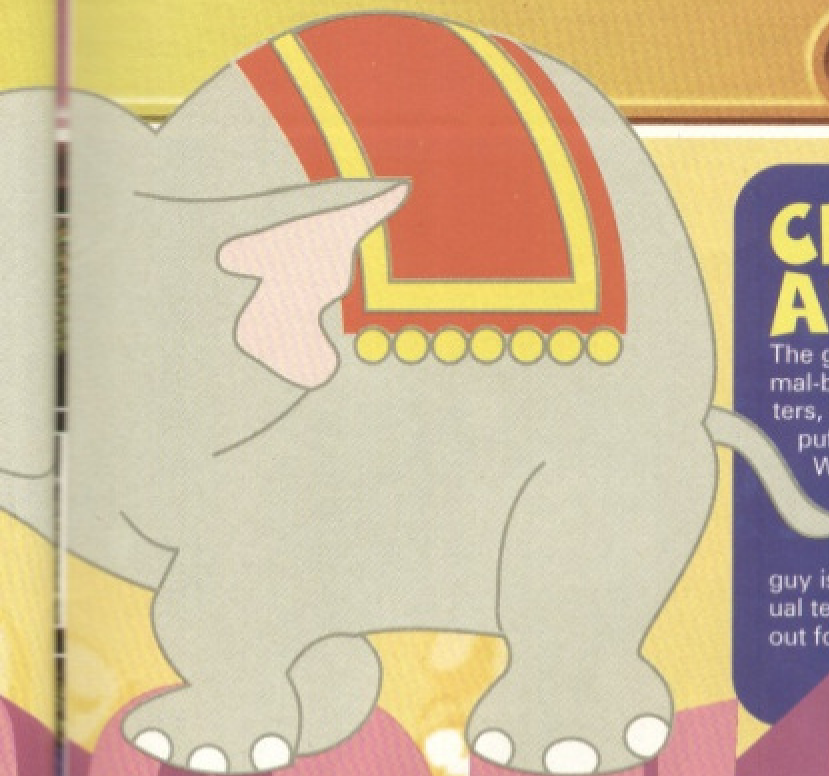


RING OF FIRE

In case you were wondering why Marsupilami would actually want to lumber himself with a gormless elephant, the reason becomes clear at the end of the first level. Jumping on the elephant's back while he douses the flames with his trunk full of water is the only way through the fiery hoop.







SPILAMI

CLOWNING AROUND





The game's politically incorrect animal-bashers include the ringmasters, who are easily whipped into a puff of smoke, and the clowns. When not throwing custard pies in your face they're indulging in dangerous juggling. "One punch and this guy is down," the instruction manual tells us of the juggler, "but look out for his dropped balls!" Hmmm.



If that's the size of his tail, what else does he keep in his Y-fronts?

TAIL ENDS

A number of peripherals can be attached, Black & Decker style, to your tail. In order to haul yourself and your not-so-delicate friend across rivers, over crates and through other obstacles, you'll need to locate the following icons on your journey...



The step function, when added to your 'armoury', gives youre tail the ability to transform itself into flight of stairs for Bonelli to amble along.



The mouse facility allows you to form your tail into the face of a mouse, sending Bonelli scarpering in the opposite direction. This is handy if you'd like to use him as a battering ram, or if you'd just like him to get a move on.



The winch allows means you can use your long-suffering tail to haul up Bonelli up to your level.

COMMENT



MARCUS

This gave everyone in the office a run for their money, and while some relished the considerable challenge, others were instantly intimidated. I gave this my best shot, and while I can appreciate how cleverly some sections of the game are constructed, the whole idea of struggling (and it is a struggle) to transport an apparently brainless elephant from one side of the screen to the other left me cold. Aside from this rather shaky concept, Marsupilami is let down by some woolly responsiveness. When this combines with very challenging gameplay then Marsupilami's appeal to the very young kids it's clearly aimed at must be brought into question.

COMMENT



GUS

And who the hell might this be? Well, Marsupilami is apparently a big star on the Continent, where the French and Belgians split their sides at his cartoon antics. But don't let that put you off. This is a Lemmings clone at heart, with lots of original ideas of its own. The concept and execution is basically sound, but the major boob is the outrageous learning curve and excruciating difficulty level. This game is probably too hard for those its styling most appeals to. Lemmings fans should, however, take note.

GRAPHICS — 83

▲You traverse, Lemmings-like, through some colourful scenery.

ANIMATION — 82

▼Actions such as winching and whipping some to be over with in relatively few frames.

MUSIC — 81

▲ A catchy and chirpy little tune is the soundtrack to your epic journey.

EFFECTS — 80

▲Taking out the porky ringmasters with you razor-sharp tail is truly satisfying

PLAYABILITY — 75

▼Essential actions are difficult to master...

LASTABILITY — 73

▼ ...and difficult to maintain enthusiasm for three levels down the line.

OVERALL

Quite charming – and quite a challenge.

81



BY SEGA

RELEASE OCTOBER

PRICE £29.99

GAME TYPE PLATFORM

1 PLAYERS

4 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
QUITE EASY

CONTINUES
PASSWORD

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

Tails takes the spotlight as the Sonic saga continues.

GAME AIM

Navigate our furry little chum through multi-scrolling platforms, beating off hostile wildlife.

BEAT THIS

Knock out the level 2 boss.

Life hasn't been terribly taxing for our two-tailed furry friend since we last saw him. If the intro sequence for Tails Adventures is anything to go by, he's not had much to do except snooze on a tree stump while life on his own little fantasy island passes him by.

But such tranquillity was bound to be short-lived. Tails finds negotiations for his next television contract interrupted by the arrival of a bad-ass pyromaniac who decides to burn the island down for no apparent reason other than it would be good for a laugh. Suddenly, all the island's animals are transformed into demonic arsonists and find themselves equipped with flame-throwers and time bombs. Armed with a set of hand grenades and his uncanny helicopter-like flying skills, Tails sets out to douse this skullduggery and collect a load of rings along the way.

OK, that's the threadbare plot. What we have here is a fairly basic Game Gear platformer for Sonic's delightful/irritating sidekick. Given centre-stage is Tails up to the task in paw? Or is he about to be out-foxed?

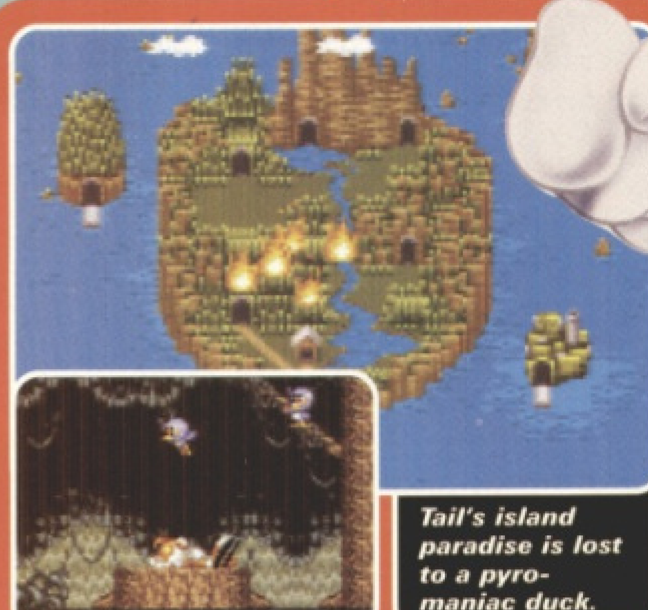






TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Tails is at one with nature and his little forest friends until what appears to be an armour-plated duck rolls up and uses his island for a barbecue. Are fox burgers on the menu?



Tail's island paradise is lost to a pyromaniac duck.

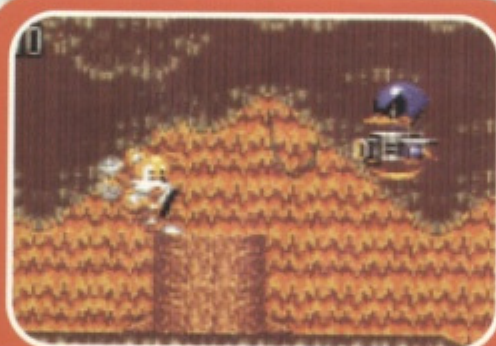
SOMEBODY STOP ME!

Power ups offering extra rings and useful accessories are secreted around the island. Looking a bit like little Sega Saturn symbols, they bring Tails' ring tally up to 20, prolonging gameplay. And no, we can't read Japanese either.





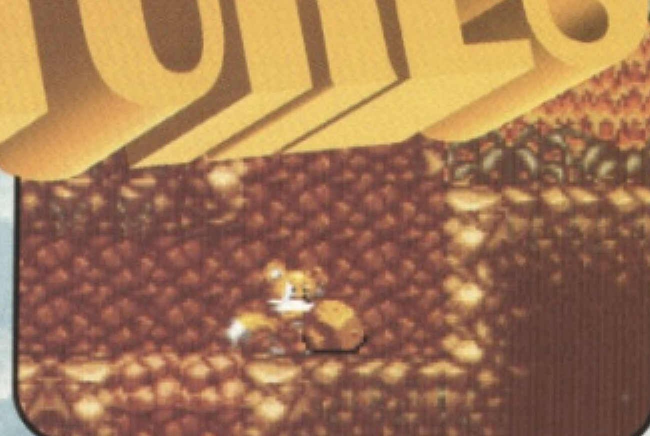




FIRE FIGHTER

In typical Sonic style, the wildlife has been robotised. This particular blue meanie sits inside a hovering flame-thrower. Automated bats and frogs are amongst the sinister cyborgs that plague you later on.

ADVENTURES





CLOCKWORK NIGHTS

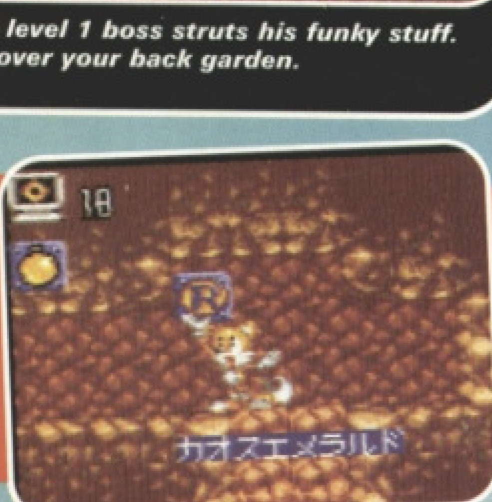
On the second level, Tails is armed with these remote-controlled toy doodlebugs which can scout potentially dangerous areas ahead of him.





The level 1 boss struts his funky stuff. All over your back garden.





COMMENT



GUS

Ho hum. Been there, done that, seen it all before. Not only is this decidely unoriginal, it's not even particularly challenging. It's all too familar from Tails' Megadrive adventures. Would, I wonder, this have made it far off the drawing board if it hadn't had Sonic's furry chum attached? I suspect not. Still, if you don't own anything like this already (and the chances of that are surely pretty slim) then you won't be disappointed.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Time to come clean. I'm a bit of a sucker for Sonic and his copter-like companion and feel that there's plenty of life left in the dynamic duo. True, I was looking forward to some 32bit excursions rather than another Game Gear potboiler, but Tails' Adventures will certainly do to be going along with. There's very little else to say about this, to be honest. It doesn't push back the frontiers of gaming as we know it, but it is a compelling and relatively taxing little platformer with just enough secret rooms and hidden power-ups to keep you coming back for more. It's a little disconcerting to see our previously peace-loving fox bombing everything in sight to forge his path, but his unique hovering ability still stands as quite an endearing feature. Not half bad.

GRAPHICS 75

▲Tails and his foes are picked out in good detail.
▼The firestorm backgrounds become repetitive.

ANIMATION 70

▲Cheeky tail flourishes abound.

MUSIC 70

▲Some nifty brushwork from the band-in-a-box drummer.

EFFECTS 65

▼Nothing to write home about.

PLAYABILITY 85

▲A familiar format with the benefit of a steep learning curve.

LASTABILITY 83

▲Keeps you coming back for more.

OVERALL

Brings nothing new to platforming, but does the job in fine style.

80

PREMIER



BY	GREMLIN
RELEASE	NOVEMBER
PRICE	AROUND £40
GAME TYPE	SIMULATION
PLAYERS	1-2
MEG	8

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
TOUGH

CONTINUES
BATTERY SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
N/A

RESPONSIVENESS
N/A

ORIGIN

Elements from all three PC Premier Manager games combine in the first Megadrive football management simulation.

GAME AIM

Train your squad, maintain your ground, beat the opposition and balance the books.

BEAT THIS

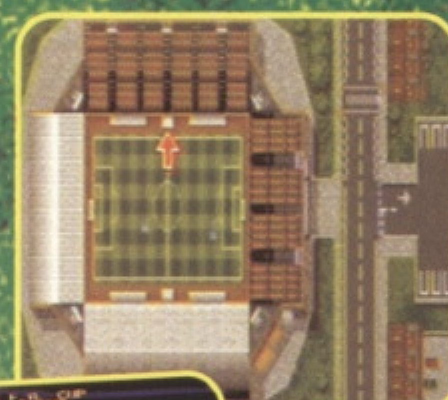
WIN YOUR LEAGUE.

Armchair football management is, of course, one of the most popular sports in the country. All across the nation, living rooms and lounge bars echo to rampant male egos casting derision on the so-called talents of various footy managers. Everyone thinks they can do better, so under the circumstances it's not so much a surprise that a management simulation has arrived for the Megadrive, so much a wonder that it's taken so long.

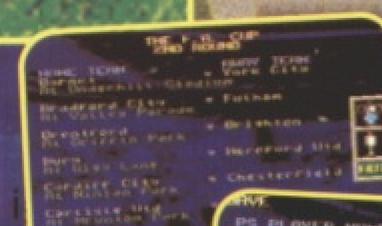
As we mentioned in last month's preview, the reason for the delay is not so much a lack of demand but the development time swallowed up in finding a way to squeeze a saved game into the Megadrive's relatively limited capacity. Typical saved games on the PC run to about 500k, while a battery save on a Megadrive cartridge can only store 32k. It's taken some head-scratching at Gremlin to find a way round the problem, but the result is the very first cartridge-based football management sim.

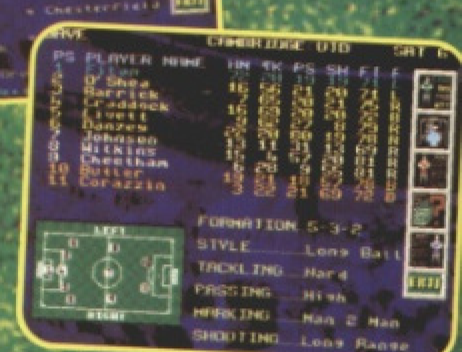
Development efforts have also been concentrated on statistical accuracy. Fifteen hundred players from the top four divisions are featured in the game, each with variable scores for their prowess at tackling, shooting, passing and handling, as well as fitness and agility.

Success means wearing the hats of chairman, coach and manager as best you can. Failure means you're heading for the job centre mid-season...















MASTER MENU

All your weekly match preparation stems from selecting the icons on this central menu. Transfers, ground improvements and news all come through here, and after every match you're returned to this central point to start all over again.





The teleprompter icon gives you the latest news of club transfers and fixtures. It can also tell you if the health and safety inspectors are snooping around your ground...

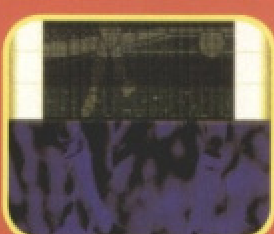
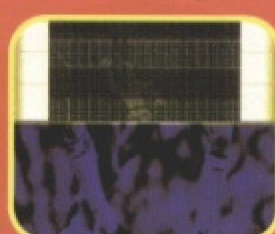
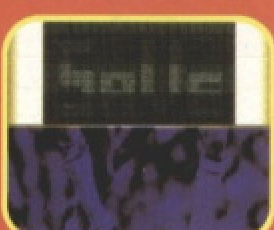
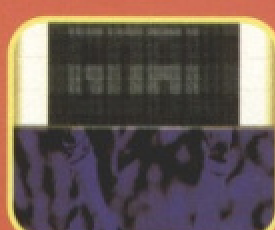


Generate som[e] taking large a[...] money from S[...] return for spl[...] promotional [...] around your [...]

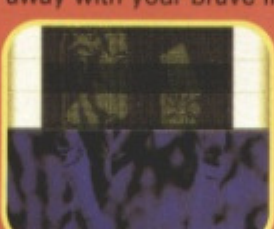
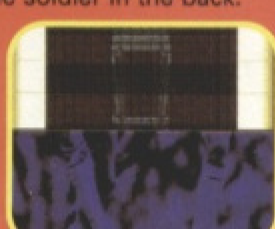
MANAGER

GAME ON

The animated scoreboard brings you highlights of your match. A simple indicator shows you the rough position of the ball on the pitch, and a rolling on-screen commentary tells you who has possession. It's edge of your seat time when the opposition approaches your goal space and takes a kick – will it be a miss, a save or a goal?

The display also informs you of bookings and injuries. These are especially amusing as a comedy ambulance zooms into shot and speeds away with your brave little soldier in the back.

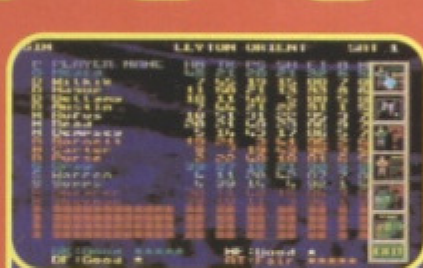










ome income by e amounts of n Sega UK in splashing al Saturn posters r stadium.



Check out your squad, and survey their fitness levels and differing 'skills'. Different colours denote positioning – and you thought it was just to make the screen pretty.

COMMENT



MARCUS

Did anyone buy a Megadrive hoping to play a football management sim on it? I thought not. This is a brave and genuinely unprecedented entry into the console stakes. Despite the fact Premier Manager will clearly be up against absolutely no competition whatsoever, its fine pedigree and careful adaptation have contributed towards this being a solid game. Scratch the surface and the seemingly endless tables of statistics begin to make sense. Follow your players through the on-screen commentary that simulates each match and you'll soon find yourself encouraging your brave lads. In short, the more you give Premier Manager, the more rewarding it becomes.

The illusion is only shattered when you stumble across the odd inaccuracy (while the teams are spot on on for the new season, some of the players seem misplaced) and when you get the impression your squad is behaving in a generic 'division 3' or 'division 2' manner. Overlook these minor quibbles, however, and you'll be surprised how compelling a statistics-based management sim can be.

COMMENT



GUS

Footy management sims have always been well received on computer formats — Spectrum Football Manager kept programmer Kevin Toms in beer money for years. So it's suprising it's taken five years and numerous unoriginal platform games before the Megadrive gets its own version. But for those itching to be Ardiles, Atkinson, Keegan or Dalgliesh, it's just the ticket. Initially the game might repel with its distinct lack of tutorial and screens of visually-challenged tables. Within a short time (an evening) you'll begin to make sense of what makes the game tick, and then get down to the tricky task of making a successful and profitable team. The only reason this doesn't score into the 'magic Nineties' is its single save game position. The inability to hold more than a single team is a frustration. Even so, this has the biggest RAM memory of any Sega cart. Which is why such games are best suited to computers after all.

GRAPHICS — 75

▲Some snappy icons make things fairly self-explanatory, and the picture menu keeps things moving.

ANIMATION — 65

▲There is only minimal animation to accompany the match commentary, but it adds some much-needed flavour.

MUSIC — 60

▼Nothing surprising, but who needs music in a management sim?

EFFECTS — 55

▼Much more could have been made of the crowd's roars and whistles.

PLAYABILITY — 87

▲The more you know about football the more fun you'll have.

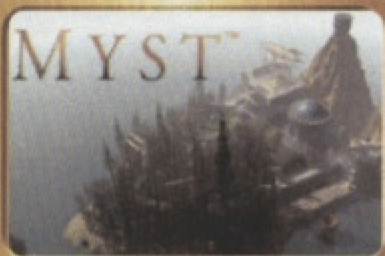
▼The less you know, the longer it will take to get started.

LASTABILITY — 92

▲Highly unpredictable, and hugely compelling as a result.

OVERALL — 89

A surprisingly addictive game dressed in deceptively drab clothes.



BY SUNSOFT

RELEASE	PRICE
TBA	TBA

GAME TYPE ADVENTURE

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

1 PLAYERS

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
HARD

CONTINUES
RAM SAVE

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
VERY SLOW

ORIGIN

Myst was originally a Mac CD-ROM project, but countless other CD versions are planned.

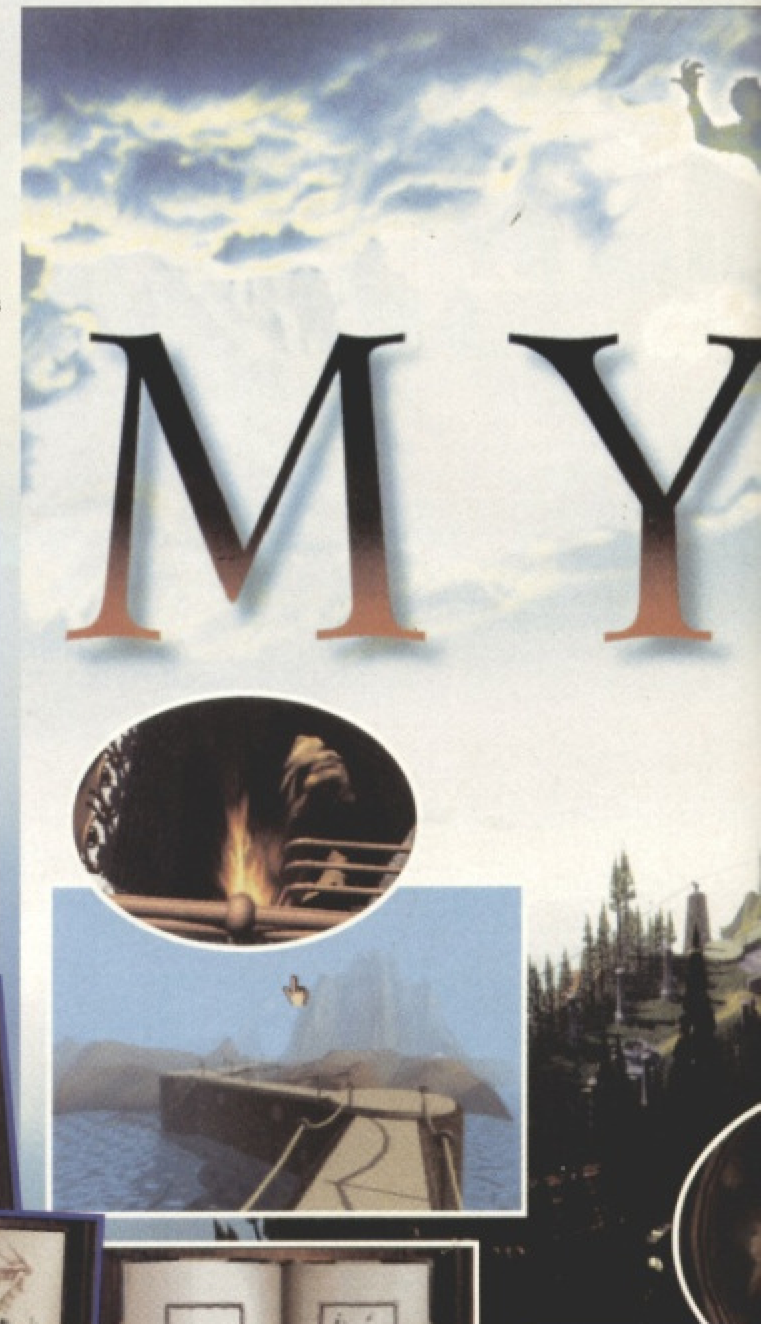
GAME AIM

Unravel the mystery of the islands using intellect and intuition.

BEAT THIS

Escape the first island.

A strange book. A series of unsettling, isolated islands. On each, the structures and edifices of cultures quite unlike our own. Mysteries within mysteries, leading to other puzzles, all united in one vast mystery of Who? Where? When? Why? How are all these connected? They are the basis of Myst. You find yourself within these worlds, with nothing to help you but your wits and clues, left by persons unnamed. Bizarre devices (magical, mechanical?) operate at the flick of a switch. Sometimes. But progress seems only to lead to more questions, and a looming sense of threat. And all from two strange books...



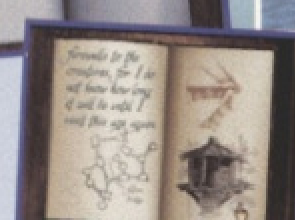
OPEN YOUR MIND

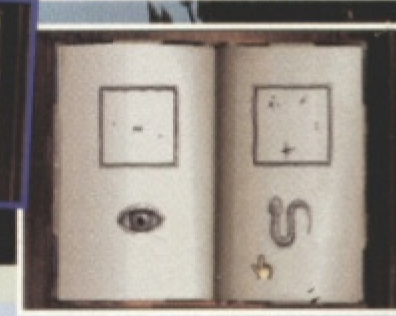
Myst is an entirely puzzle-driven game. There are no guns, no 'baddies', no deaths and no credits. Success is measured in progress. Progress is made when you reach an unattainable place or discover the purpose for one of the many machines you reach. Although the puzzles are complex, the control is a simple point and click interface. The graphics don't scroll, but are made up by a series of locations the screen flicks to.





THE POWER CHAIN







The Generator, offering variable power settings.



The Airship, needs power and a special code.

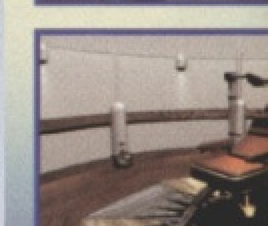


The Power line, prone to circuit breaks.



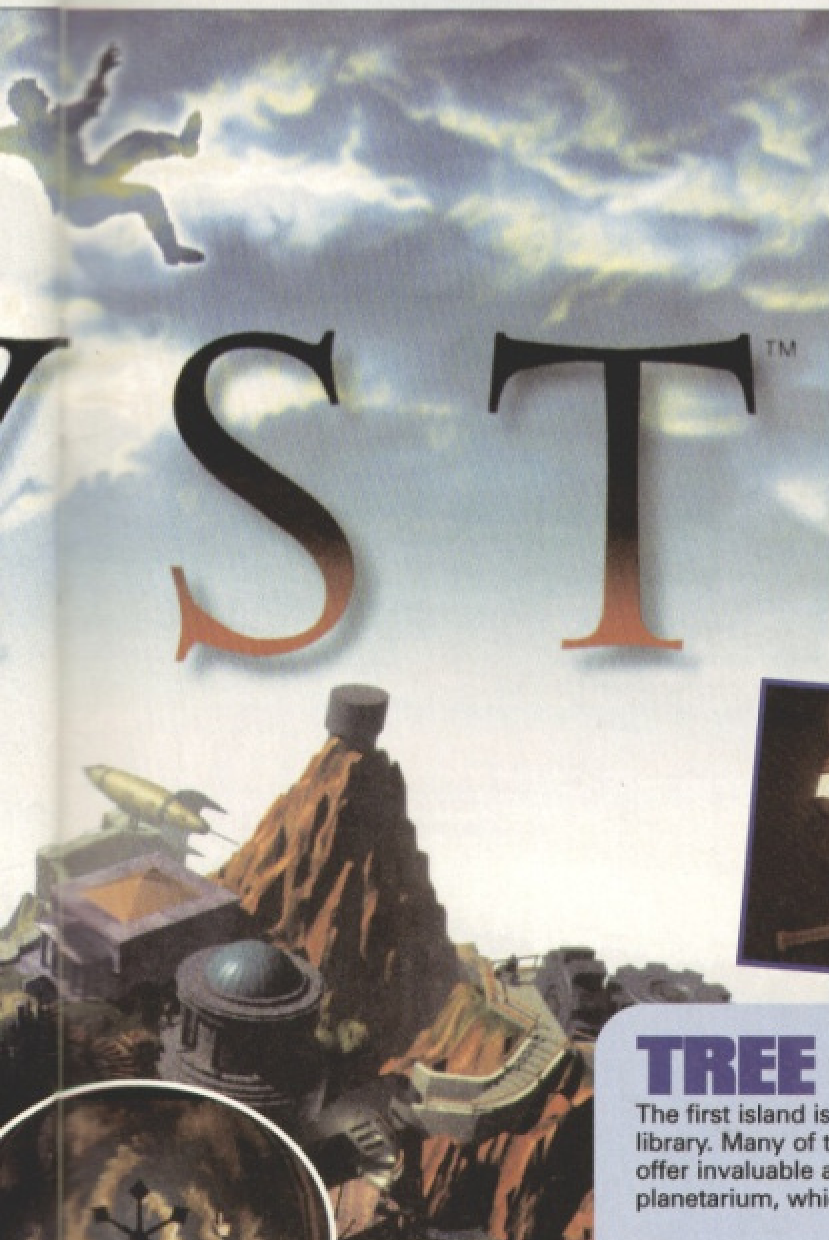
Tinkling the ivories completes the chain....















PLAY MYSTY FOR ME

Myst has been converted from the original Mac game which took the Cyan team four years to design, render and assemble. A multimedia demo of 'The Making of Myst' is hidden on the CD.



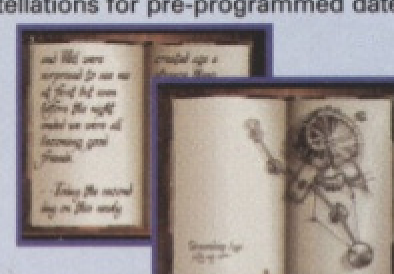




TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

The first island is a pivotal point of the adventure. At its heart is a library. Many of the books are charred, but the remaining journals offer invaluable assistance. Next to the library is a personal planetarium, which displays constellations for pre-programmed dates.





COMMENT



MARCUS

When Myst first appeared on the Mac, and later the PC, it heralded the beginning of something pretty special. No-one had seen anything like it before, and it launched a wave of similiarly sumptuous adventures like The 11th Hour and the Alone in the Dark series. As a result of all these similar games, Myst started looking a little dated. While there's still nothing to fault it in the graphics department, my original concerns about the rather static gameplay persist with the Saturn version. Yes, it's very atmospheric – but is that enough? Not any more, I'm afraid. My guess is that we'll see a similar pattern emerge with Saturn software that we saw with other systems and that Myst will just be the beginning. In other words, the best is hopefully yet to come.

COMMENT



GUS

Myst is a peculiar game on any format, but even weirder to play on a console. After the pace of Daytona and Virtua Fighter, it may seem horribly sedate to wander through the beautifully crafted worlds of Myst, but as an adventure game there's little to touch its atmosphere and construction. There is huge attention to detail, from the wonderfully written diaries in the library, to the eerie instruments of torture in the bowels of mechanical world. There is very little given in terms of explanation, so playing the game is bewildering, and a little menacing. The many puzzles interlink, and are much more sophisticated than 'take object A to site B'. This is a niche game with limited appeal, but its pretty outstanding, nonetheless.

GRAPHICS – 91
▲Fantastic still rendered landscapes. It's a work of real creative imagination.

ANIMATION – 10
▼The game is basically a series of stills, with only a few areas of animation.

MUSIC – 75
▲Short excerpts of spooky music accompany certain areas.
▼Most of the game is played in silence.

EFFECTS – 84
▲The convincing FX suit the areas. Some puzzles use sound for their solutions.

PLAYABILITY – 83
▲Adventure fans will perceive the quality and ingenuity of the game.
▼No action, and no real baddie.

LASTABILITY – 80
▲Finishing the game requires lateral thinking, and while you play you are totally absorbed.
▼It's a story, to be followed only once.

OVERALL – 82
The most original adventure idea for years, elaborate and lovingly crafted. Explore its delights.



BY	CODEMASTERS
RELEASE	OCTOBER
PRICE	£44.99
GAME TYPE	DRIVING
PLAYERS	1-4
MEG	16

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
TRICKY

CONTINUES
1-6

SKILL LEVELS
1

RESPONSIVENESS
GOOD

ORIGIN

The third in this innovative series of table-top racing games

GAME AIM

Navigate your tiny car/truck/jet around fiendishly difficult courses composed of household objects.

BEAT THIS

Reach Race 10 on challenge mode.

THE ORI… Micro M… '9… TURBO TOU…

No, the world's favourite overhead racing game hasn't notched up version no.3 just yet. Micro Machines '96 is a stop-gap until next year's Micro Machines 3, and is best regarded as an upgrade to the second version of the game.

Micro Machines 2 has apparently shifted a quarter of a million copies since its release, and this new hybrid is the result of 12 months' research into souping up the formula. The Micro Machines experience is an abject lesson in no-nonsense gameplay beating flash graphics hands down. You have control of a tiny car which bombs around various rooms in the Micro Machines house. Choose your speed machine from an array of trucks, cars and even jet planes on offer, negotiating everything from gas stoves to bunsen burners in your mission to complete circuits of table tops ahead of your competitors. Aerial views of the 65 tracks highlight forthcoming obstacles and your rivals' efforts to sneak ahead of you or nudge you off the table altogether.

Of all the tweaks and extra features Micro Machines '96 presents, perhaps the most exciting is the new 'construction kit' facility – a customisation tool allowing you to design your own tracks and save them for future use. So, without further ado, let's lower the chequered flag for a whistle-stop tour of the latest Micro Machines' new features...



MEGA GAME

STACKS OF TRACKS

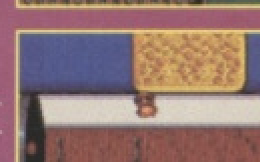
Micro Machines '96 features 65 new levels, and amongst these are eight brand new scenarios. The most entertaining see you negotiate such outlandish menaces as flaming bunsen burners, barbeques and exercise machines.

BBQ BURNOFF



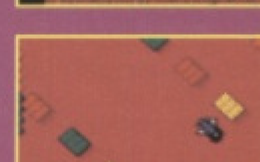
If you don't scale the barbeque quick enough you fry along with the sausages.

SCIENCE LAB



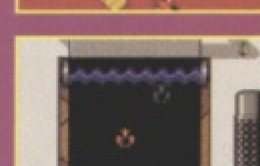
An impromptu game of frogger across across the laboratory sink. Ah, brings back memories.

JET JOUST



Start the engines, point your plane in the right direction and keep your fingers crossed on this screen.

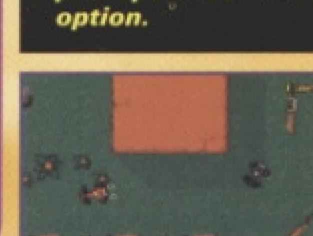
GO KARTS

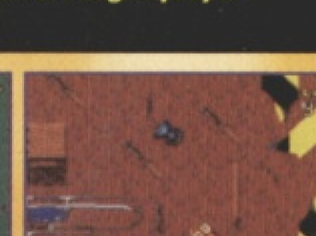


Stuck on the running machine, you and your fellow go kart drivers face an eternity of gameplay with all the breathtakig variety of Outrun.



Opportunites for spectacular mult-car pile-ups abound with the eight player option.





RIGINAL

Machines 6 URNAMENT

COMMENT



MARCUS

Micro 2 is one of the best games on the Megadrive so this definite improvement should be a totally essential puchase, non? Personally, I'm a big enough fan of the game to want to have this as well as Micro 2, but there'll be quite a few people who won't. This is mainly down to the fact that a fair amount of the tracks are taken from the last game. Admittedly they're the best ones, but some people still won't feel too happy about buying the same tracks again. Anyway, forget 'em because the new tracks and vehicles are great, the massive number of new play modes make the four-player option even better and the track editor is essential. Big Micro fans shouldn't even think twice about buying this, even if they've got the other two games.

COMMENT



GUS

The best just got better – there's no dispute about that. The only debate lies in whether you're going to want this if you've already got Micro Machines 2. Well, I reckon this is a pretty essential purchase, and here's why. Whereas the new scenarios like the gymnasium, the camp site and the science lab are good fun, they're simply variations on themes we've seen before. The construction kit, on the other hand, lends a whole new dimension to the game, and being able to save tracks means my masterpieces of modern art motorways are going to keep be busy at least until Micro Machines 3 rolls along. Who'd have thought town planning could be this much fun?

DO IT YOURSELF

The most innovative feature of this new Micro Machines is the customisation kit. Choose your vehicle, tailor its speed capabilities and, most importantly, design your own track. Lay your road over a background of your choice (concrete, grass, sand and so on) and then add obstacles of your choosing. As long you have an uninterrupted loop of track, you're free to clutter the course with whatever rubbish you like.

SPEED KING

Choose your mode of transport from the array of jalopies on offer.



MAKING TRACKS

Select curved or straight sections of track and assemble them into a loop of any description.



SCENIC ROUTE

Decorate your creation with selected bric a brac like giant tin cans and marauding water pistols.



BEHIND THE WHEEL

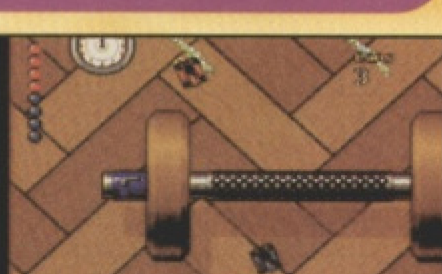
Assuming everything you've devised makes some logical sense, regardless of how brutal it may be, then you're ready to go.



ROAD TO HELL

You zoom in to experience your nightmarish driving experience in all its sodden and windswept glory.





Dumbell Derby in the gym. Other new scenarios include the camp site and the lab.





GRAPHICS 86
▲ Typically workmanlike, with an almost solid feel to some sections.

ANIMATION 84
▲ Super smooth, with the ever-entertaining exhaust phuts.

MUSIC 84
▲ A raunchy new rock 'n' roll soundtrack.

EFFECTS 80
▼ Pretty much the same as before, really.

PLAYABILITY 91
▲ Uncommonly addictive, with one of the best multi-player modes (and facilities) ever seen in a game.

LASTABILITY 93
▲ We're still playing Micro Machines 2. This will last longer.

OVERALL
New twists, new features, same superb game.

92

BY ACCLAIM

RELEASE TBA

PRICE TBA

GAME TYPE BEAT 'EM UP

1-2 PLAYERS

32 MEG

BREAK DOWN

ORIGINALITY

CHALLENGE

ACTION

STRATEGY

REFLEXES

OPTIONS

CONTROL
JOYPAD

GAME DIFFICULTY
MEDIUM

CONTINUES
5

SKILL LEVELS
3

RESPONSIVENESS
VERY GOOD

ORIGIN

A conversion of the arcade games – which was the sequel to a sequel!

GAME AIM

Beat everyone up one at a time to save/destroy the Earth, depending on your choice of character.

BEAT THIS

Complete on Normal setting.

MORTAL KO

You don't really care about the plots of beat 'em ups do you? No-one does. They always involve every character entering the tournament to get revenge on the big boss for killing their parents/brother/cat. But, wait for it, in Mortal Kombat 3 we've got a beat 'em up with a slightly different plot!

MK3 (as it's known in these parts) involves Shao Kahn and his hoards of evil forcibly trying to conquer Earth for their Outworld realm as well as the greedy Kahn killing everyone on the planet to claim their souls as his own. Most of the human race has been wiped out but the few surviving warriors pack up their weapons and set out to save the world. Add to this Sub-Zero being marked for death by his now robotic ninja clan and Sonya out to recapture Kano and you've got all sorts of chaos. The criss-crossing plot means that you've got the battle of good Earth against bad Outworld people as well as a few revenge stories chucked in for good measure. The way the characters choose to fight is very simple – one-on-one. Not only is it a very honourable way of sorting out your differences, it makes for a great two-player game! Hurrah!

NEW KHARACTERS

There are 14 regular characters for you to select, with five of them returning from Mortal Komabt 2 (Sang Tsung, Jax, Liu Kang, Sub Zero and Kung Lao), two hailing from the original Mortal Kombat (Kano and Sonya) and 7 new challengers ready for you to master. You know all about the old fighters so here's the rundown on the new ones...

SINDEL



Sindel is the bride of Shao Kahn and has been brought back from the dead. She has the ability to fly as well as spit fireballs and scream her opponents to death.

STRYKER



When Shao Kahn invaded Earth, he wiped out Stryker's home city. Being a riot cop, Stryker's got a big baton and lots of grenades to help him keep the peace.

CYRAX



Cyrax's special advantages include a net to trap his opponents, grenades hidden in his chest and teleport capbilities.



SEKTOR



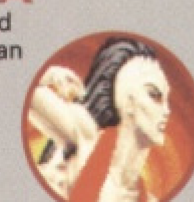
Sektor is Cyrax's twin brother. Thankfully their parents decided to dress them in different colours. Sektor's chest plate opens to release missiles, both homing and straight, and he can teleport beneath his opponent and punch them from below.

NIGHTWOLF



The Mortal Kombat American Indian is armed with a glowing axe and spiritual bow and arrow. The best bit about Nightwolf, however, is that you can bounce fireballs back at your opponent, including Sub-Zero's ice.

SHEEVA



'Big for-armed dragon woman with green blood' is the best way to describe Goro's friend Sheeva. She's borrowed the ability to throw fireballs and to jump from a great height onto her opponent.

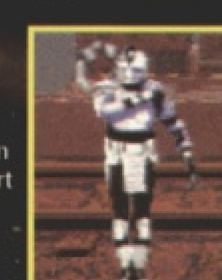
KABAL



Kabal nearly died at the order of Shao Kahn and has to get revenge with his life-support system still strapped to his back. Kabal can spin his opponents around until they get dizzy, giving him a chance to start a brilliant combo with his sword things. He can also shoot the obligatory fireball and chop his enemy up with spikes.

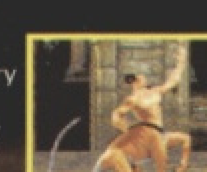


SMOKE



Smoke is a secret playable character who can use Scorpion's harpoon as well as a teleport punch and a great invisibility mode. You'll see his face appear on the select screen occasionally but getting him isn't that easy. Stay tuned to find out how.

MOTARO

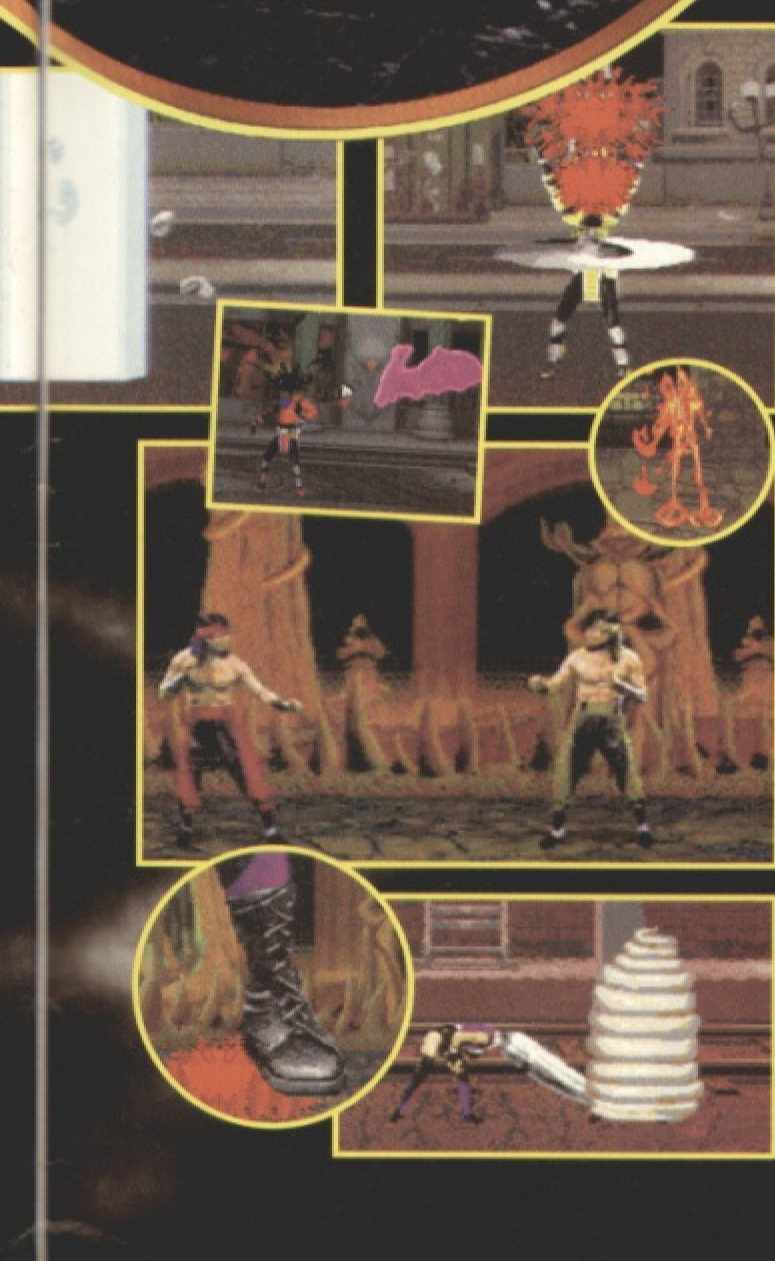


Shao Kahn, like every mad demon lord bloke, needs a body guard. Who better than Motaro? Motaro is a member of a race of four-legged dragon thingies and is armed with painful fireballs, the ability to teleport and very big muscles.









COMMENT



MARCUS

First of all, a brief word of warning. When you first play this you'll almost definitely say that it isn't as good as MK2. Keep playing, however, and as you get into it and learn some decent kombos you'll see why we like it so much. For one, it's way way faster than MK2, which instantly makes the game more exciting. The kombo system, which at first seems silly, really adds to the game, giving you something else to learn and master other than finishing moves. The graphics and sound are digitised from the arcade so they're a bit fuzzy, but with a game like this you can put up with little quibbles. The game's been around in the arcades for a good few months now and still not all of the secrets have been found so this'll keep you going for ages. All in all, it's just another brilliant Mortal Kombat, and probably the best Megadrive beat 'em up I've ever seen.

COMMENT



GUS

It's the same old thing isn't it? Digitised fighters who move at the same speed as one another, have the same reach, use similar special moves and have the same fatalities. Well, yes and no. Even though each character is similar to the last, more so than Super Streetfighter 2, they all play differently, most notably in the kombo department. As we've come to expect from the Kombat series there are loads of finishing moves (friendships, babalities, animalities, mercies) which have all been improved as well as plenty of funny, rather than gory, fatalities. The actual game plays better than before but I still prefer SSF2's style of massively different fighters. The secret kodes and things will take you ages to discover but when you do they'll actually improve the game, evening out one-sided battles and the like, to keep your interest in the game for a long time to come. MK one had to fight with SF2:SCE for sales, MK2 had SSF2 to worry about, but MK3 has nothing stopping it from being the number one Megadrive beat 'em up around.

GRAPHICS — 91

▲The characters are highly detailed.
▼The digitised backgrounds are a bit grainy.

ANIMATION — 80

▲The character animation has been improved from MK2 but...
▼Some of the backgrounds seem a bit static.

MUSIC — 75

▲Good bonging bell music and thumping bass set the mood.
▼Probably the weakest area of the game.

EFFECTS — 93

▲Just about every speech and scream sample from the arcade original is included and they aren't bad quality either.

PLAYABILITY — 93

▲Fast, smooth action – fun to play and learn.
▼Takes a while to get into.

LASTABILITY — 94

▲We're still playing MK2, and this one has tons of moves, kombos, kodes and other secret stuff to keep you going for ages.

OVERALL — 93

Your hard work will be repayed by months of entertainment. The best beat 'em up for a very long time.

SONIC LABYRINTH

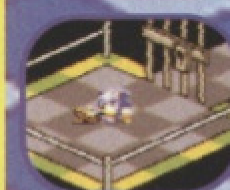
RELEASE: OCTOBER	MEG: 4
PLAYERS: 1	PRICE: £29.99
BY: SEGA	GAME TYPE: PUZZLE

Category	Score	Comment
GRAPHICS	75	Sonic is in fine spiky form. Everything else is pretty basic.
EFFECTS	60	Few surprises.
ANIMATION	66	Nothing sophisticated. The high speeds the game plays at don't help.
PLAYABILITY	73	Quite an original and intriguing premise.
MUSIC	62	Someone let that wasp out of that bottle.
LASTABILITY	70	Frustration soon kills enthusiasm.
OVERALL	76	A peculiar game, and an unsatisfying play.

While Tails is busy fending off the backdraft on his private island, Sonic has found himself in altogether more surreal difficulties. Snatched from his platform paradise, our blur in blue has been deposited on a chequerboard hovering in a psychedelic sky. His only way out is to roll himself into a spinball and collide into various meanies, avoid sticky patches of chewing gum and slide across moving walkways until he can find the keys and rings to unlock his escape route.

Aside from his fleeting guest appearance in Bug!, Sega's mascot hedgehog is currently being put through his paces on just about anything and everything the Game Gear can throw at him. This time round, it's a fast-moving puzzle which sees Sonic batter himself through various obstacles with scant regard for personal safety. Shouldn't someone at Sega have put him on danger money by now?











Chewing gum – don't you just hate it when that happens?



The little blue guy takes a trip on planet freakout.



COMMENT



MARCUS

I just couldn't get my head round this. The game moves in fits and starts as you find yourself being flung around at incredible speeds in the usually vain hope of passing through the right area (or hitting the right baddie) in your search for keys and rings. Annoyingly, the degree of control you seem to be able exercise over your fate is limited – you can get through each level with a bit of practise but you're left wondering how you did it. Ultimately, this game is bonkers. And, sadly, fairly repetitive and frustrating. Oh, and a warning to hedgehog lovers – the level of physical brutality our blue chum has to endure is second only to the battering he received during Sonic Spinball.

COMMENT



GUS

Puzzles like this are perfect for the Game Gear – not too grand in scale and easy to tackle in short segments at a time, they make for excellent hand-held fun. OK, Sonic Labyrinth is flawed, but everyone's favourite hedgehog behaves in in character and some of the graphics brought back fond memories of the Sonic coin-op. If you're into puzzle games, pinball or even Sonic generally, this should appeal if you can get round its limited scope. And some of the cheeky little graphics touches are worth a grin. I didn't expect too much from this, but it kept me amused for a while.

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OUT NO

Once again, Sega twist our arms at right angles to our bodies and we review the Saturn stuff that was out yonks ago and which is due out for your super UK machine about now. Apart from the first of this month's titles, which is one of those import thingies we couldn't be bothered to tackle first time round. All Japanese instructions and stuff, you understand. So if you have a Saturn this is it for the month of October:



DIGITAL PINBALL

£44.99

1-4 PLAYERS

This has undergone a name transformation from its Japanese incarnation as 'Last Gladiators' to the rather less grandiose and eminently more relevent 'Digital Pinball'. This is a rendition of the age-old game of flipper that sits in many a pub, pier and grimy arcade.

There's nothing grimy about this game,however, which comes from little-known developer 'Kaze' in Japan. It's beautifully presented, with extremely crisp graphics and stylish overlays. The copious sound effects are similarly tip top and crystal clear.

What Digital Pinball attempts to do, and is one of its failings in the process, is be extremely faithful to the mechanics of the game. Instead of using overhead-viewed scrolling tables, the action is viewed from a static, slanted table which is contained within a single screen. Many of the features are semi-transparent, allowing you to see the ball when it's tucked up the back of the screen. The ball movement is very convincing, and it's a remarkably close interpretation of real pinball.

Unfortunately, pinball as it actually stands doesn't quite work on console. The space a scrolling table offers means more features, and Digital Pinball's four separate tables are cramped and generally uninspiring. Complexity has been added by creating all sorts of complex bonus paths, explained in a series of instructions. Although there are plenty of ways to score points not much else, except perhaps multiballs, is likely to happen. The themes are amusing, like a gladiatoral table with mini colloseum, Warlock table with spell multipliers and a Samurai game with martial arts slants.

The game is made more stimulating by use of its 'dot matrix' interludes. These narrow sequences play across the screen, with stylish monochromatic images accompanied by amusingly doom-laden utterances. The game becomes thick with them the more skilled you become.

Digital Pinball is not bad at all, and at first is quite compulsive. It's the long term value that we doubt, considering the saminess of the tables and that all the combined bonuses and features seem to lead only to higher scores, not new effects. Points may be enough for wizards, but we're console gamesplayers here.







OVERALL 67

Puritanical pinball for pedants, but true to the game by the same token.

W!

BUG!

£49.99

1 PLAYER

So this was reviewed but two months ago, but games this good are few and far between, so you should now make an effort to buy the damn thing now it's out. Bug's main achievement is to put a bit of spunk back into platform games, just as they're going through a bit of an unpopular patch.

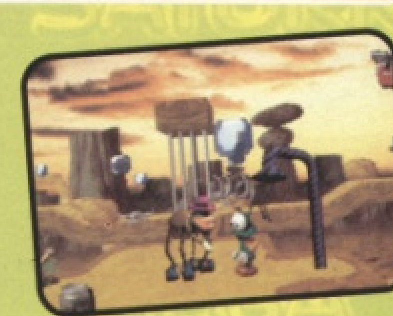
It's true that nothing in the game is amazingly original, or that the gameplay is that complex, but that's an asset in many ways. Bug is an instantly enjoyable game to play, accessible to all levels of gamesplayers, but rapidly proving itself as a pillow-biting challenge. From World 2 onwards expect no mercy.

The game's unique feature is Bug's ability to walk 'into' the screen on its platforms and walkways, which the Saturn handles with as much ease as normal left/right movement. All kinds of other nifty scaling and perspective effects are handled. Part of the compulsion is seeing what's in store later.

Fab graphics, great sound, excellently structured game – I think we have this month's 'best buy'.

OVERALL 94

Should be the definitive Saturn platformer for some time.



VIRTUAL HYDLIDE

£39.99

1 PLAYER

We must confess to being a bit surprised that Sega bothered to convert T&E Soft's early RPG for the UK Saturn. That type of game is always for a niche market, so it's a sign of Sega's commitment to provide a broad raft of game styles for the machine early on.

Having said that, our reflections on Hydlide would suggest that it's not really aimed at the serious RPG gamer anyway: this is a 3-D exploration game bearing the hallmarks of Dungeons and Dragons. Playing an energetic young adventurer, you explore a large map which has about ten locations you can actually go and visit.

These are rather more interesting than the aimless wandering within the dull grey, randomly generated outdoor landscape. There are objects to be collected and equipped, new weapons and armour and the occasional puzzle to solve.

The graphics are strange – functional 3-D, but extremely blocky and blurred, especially close up, so the effect, overall is not too pleasing.

Our assessment of Hydlide has cooled from the import review, even though the UK version makes matters like reading less of a chore. Coupled with more interesting RPG developments due from Sega. If you must have some form of RPG, you might want to consider Hydlide.





OVERALL 71

A simple RPG in a Legoland environment. Generally flawed.

SHINOBI X

£TBA

1 PLAYER

Shinobi X was one of the first Saturn projects to be announced, and really offers a taster of what the machine can do. To the dismay of some, it's a standard left to right style platformer, indeed a textbook example of the genre. That's not to say that it doesn't have a few fancy tricks to show, however.

The styling and gameplay is very much in tune with the three previous Megadrive Musashi games. Joe, the ninja hero, pulls off the same mixture of acrobatics and magic – many of the same moves. The difference is excellent new animation, using digitised actor sprites.

In the game's favour, the control is very responsive and quite instinctive. Using blocking and combination attacks makes Shinobi more than hack and slash, and your opponents are similarly smarter than the average platform game stooge. The nine levels start to get hellish about half way through, and take you through familiar, pagoda, minecart and dungeon territory, with your gal's kidnappers always one step ahead.

Since our favourable import review, Sega's major change has been to the music. Unhappy with the Japs' trashy ditties, Sega commissioned one of their composers at Sega UK in Chiswick to come up with an original soundtrack. It's rather more atmospheric than the original. Also, the game seems to play slightly faster, upping the difficulty level marginally.

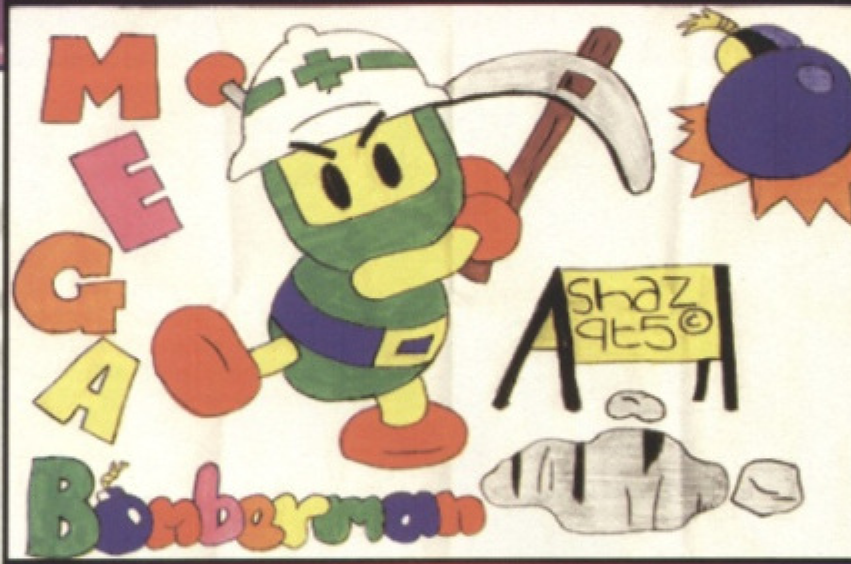
There are some valid criticisms to be made of Shinobi X for being too conservative and unadventurous, but there are always takers of well-tailored conventional titles, and Shinobi should have its market.



OVERALL 84

Smacks firmly of Shinobi.

MEAN YOB



Bomberman by Sharon Dixon (Any relation to Ron and Bev?), aged 15, from Manchester.

A quiet word in your shell-likes about bodily emissions. Sending them to me through the post is not big. Or clever. What's more it causes considerable distress to the ladies in the office. And it upsets Claire and Lucy. So, the scumball who sent a selection of his snot to me in the post is not only a prat, but also stupid – you put your address at the top of the letter. Expect a surprise soon, sucker.
In the meantime, send appreciations, polite constructive criticism and cash to: YOB'S SAMPLE BOTTLE, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU

EAR WAX

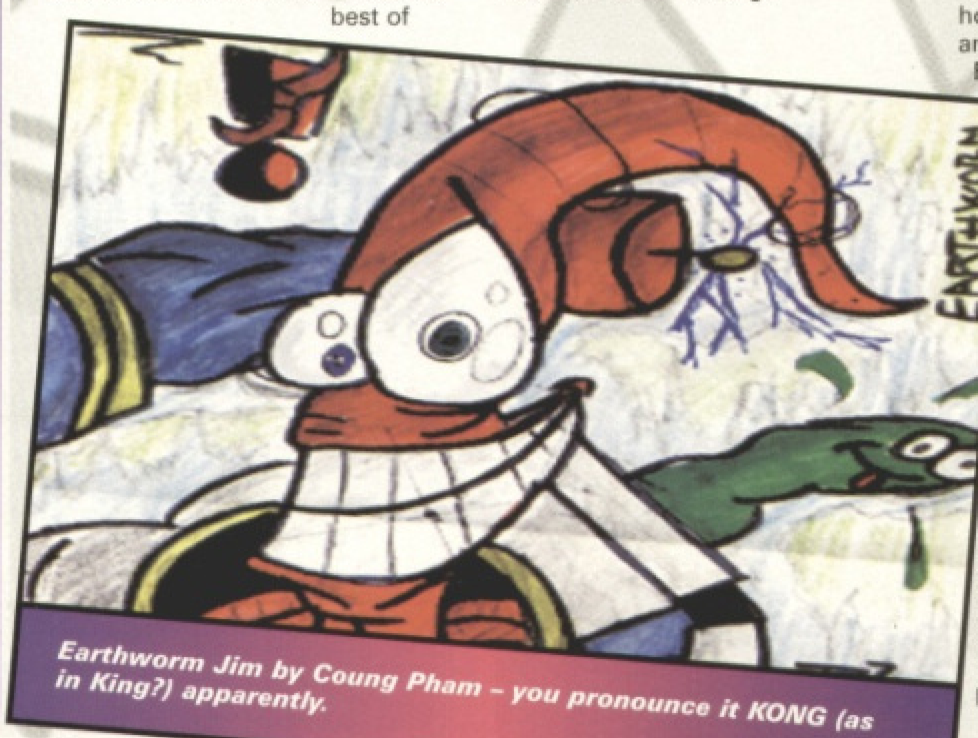
Dear Yob
What is everyone's problem? It seems we've just replaced one debate for another. We've spent years getting bored fartless with people banging on about the 'Sega v Nintendo' debate and bickering endlessly about which is the better machine, the Megadrive or the SNES. Just when it seemed like all that rubbish had been forgotten, here we go again – Saturn v Playstation. It's not as if there's that much difference between the two machines – what this is really about is people slagging off their mates' machines simply because they've got something different. A few years back, I decided to get a Megadrive and a SNES, so the debate didn't touch me – I had the best of both worlds. Now, my solution is the same. I bought a Saturn the day they came out, and I'll be there as soon as the Playstation is available. And before anyone starts whining about money, I'd just like to say that I'm serious about my gaming so I think it's essential to have the best that's out there. After all, buying a Saturn and a Playstation is still going to cost less than buying a PC – the other so-called games platform of the future. I reckon that if you're not prepared to get the best that's out there, and experience the best that both formats have to offer, then you're probably not very serious about playing games at all.
Mark Leach, Palmers Green, London
YOB: What about the debate between the Master System and the Gameboy? Which machine is superior there? And the Tandy Colour Genie and the Commodore Vic20? You lot have got short memories haven't you? A few years pass and suddenly we're all going next generation and good old-fashioned computing isn't good enough for you any more, oh no. Well, I say there are scores that still need settling.



Bugs 'r' Us by Ryan Hunter from East Kilbridge.

SCALP FLAKES

Dear Yob
I've been playing games for years, but have recently encountered a bit of a problem. My girlfriend says that games are for nerds and 'anoraks' and has told me that she's embarrassed about my "sad hobby". I'm saving up for a Saturn and I know that when I get Virtua Fighter my "sad hobby" is going to get even more addictive.
Keith Watson, Keynsham, Bristol
YOB: Tricky one this. Girls are pretty cool, but Virtua Fighter is a smart game. Sod it – ditch the chick.



Earthworm Jim by Coung Pham – you pronounce it KONG (as in King?) apparently.

BOTTY SCRAPES

Dear Yob
Sega Power are really getting up my nose. They slag you off all the time, and never do a real review without some stupid attempt at comedy. I mean, what exactly is a "tips nappy"?
Steven Tage, Dudley, Birmingham
YOB: Simple. It's a disposable pair of pants full of cak.





CRUSTY SCABS

Dear Yob
I'm writing to you about a subject that I must get off my chest – it's the Saturn. Even though I am a tad skint and currently unable to buy one I feel that I have to bring up the old chestnut of games companies monopolising the market. I am merely a humble Megadrive owner and already know what it's like to cough up vast piles of cash for games that only cost a smidgen of the price to make, normally being led into buying such stuff because they have a high bit memory or a plug through system (yes I do have S+K, for my crimes). What puzzles me, is why do Sega price CDs that have no fancy chips or other moving parts the same as ye olde Megadrive games? A CD probably costs even less to produce than a cart, so why aren't they priced lower? It's about time those nice people down at Sega Europe got off their butts and did something about it. I leave you to your digestive related insults, because sad people like me deserve it for whinging like this.
Ben Sole, West Bromley, Kent
YOB: Arse hairs. Insults relating to bottom bristles are far more satisfying than digestive related insults. Where's the fun in slagging off someone's biscuits? Anyway, arse hairs. Why don't you pull yours round your ears?

WEEPING SORES

Dear Yob
The fact that Sega aren't including an RF lead with the Saturn is a bit below the belt really. 80% of homes may well have scart capable TVs but Sega should also consider the other 20%.
While I'm on the subject of Saturns, I was looking through a mail order brochure recently when I noticed the catalogue company were charging £500 and not even including a game. If you wanted Virtua Fighter you had to pay an extra £60. My advice would be to steer clear. Catalogues can be a good thing, but there are plenty of places selling the Saturn for £350 with a game.
M. Kilvington, Southsea, Essex
YOB: In estimating that most people did indeed have access to a scart TV, Sega's decision to not bundle an RF lead was an afford to keep the price of the machine as low as possible. Had they included an RF lead it would have bumped up the price for all the people who didn't need one (the majority, after all) as well as though who did. Besides, what's the matter with you? Haven't they got any electricians' shops where you live? Bah!



This one comes from RHH 95 apparently. Thanks. Whoever you are.

And that's just about it from your friendly neighbourhood shclockmeister for another month of heated debate and friendly banter. The world waits with baited breath and fevered brow as the dawn of a wondrous new pile of old toss comes around again next issue.

Q&A

Okay, we have to come clean. Steve is not answering Q&A any more. We could try and wing it, but I guess you'd see through it. This is Gus. No, honestly it is. So now I've got to explain why we're still using Steve's pic here. Er, is that the time? It is the time you know. 4 bloody AM. Look I don't want to spin a sob story but there really is no time to get in a argument about who's running the Q&A page. Surely it's tha answers that count. Well, enjoy the letters and I'll see you in a bit.

MAGIC SPINDLE

Dear Steve
I am writing to you to warn you about an ad in MEAN MACHINES SEGA for Spectrum Trading UK. I saw the advert for games, so I sent away for Toe Jam and Earl 3. That was at the beginning of July and I have not received my game. I have phoned them up and all I keep getting is an answer machine. I have left messages on that, I have written to them, I have not heard back from them. I thought I write to see if there's anything you can do, and also as a warning for other readers of your magazine.
C. Stapleton
GUS:We'll certainly investigate your complaint. We take care over our advertiser, but sometimes things happen. It is important that you take care when replying to Mail Order ads. Make sure the company is contactable by phone, don't send cash and check if the company has advertised for some time. State that you want your goods within a working week, and they be sent registered post: any decent firm will do this. Reputable mail order importers we know are Video Games Centre in Bournemouth and Ace Consoles on 0171 439 1185.

QUALU-UDE

Dear Steve
Can you answer these questions:
1. Can you play music CDs on the Saturn?
2. Do you need an adaptor?
3. I have £50 — what Saturn game shall I buy?
4. Is Primal Rage any good for Saturn?
5. How much will it cost?
6. When will it be coming out?
Stephen Smith, Wolverhampton
GUS:1. Yes you can.
2. No adaptor needed.
3. Daytona or Bug!
4. Dunno, but will know next month.
5. About £50.
6. November-December time.

COCOA

Dear Steve
I think your mag is the best in existence, even better than Sega Pro! Please, please, grovel, grovel, print this letter:
1. For Nintendo's Ultra 64, it has been decided to use cartridges instead of CDs. A bloke at Nintendo said it was better to use cartridges because they can store more information. But what's the proper answer?
2. Is JVC Boxing on the Saturn any good?
3. One of Sonja Blade's moves in MK3 involves taking all her clothes off. True?
4. Is the quality of the MPEG adaptor on the Saturn any good?
5. Why didn't Bullfrog include a battery back up on the Saturn version of Theme Park?
6. What do you think of Sega signing a deal with Californian company NVDIA that will allow Sega to develop and play games on the PC?
7. The Saturn has three 32bit processors, so why is it called a 32bit machine?
Richard Marsh, Shrewsbury
GUS:1. Nintendo opted for cartridge for various reasons, but storage is not really one of them. The advantage of cartridge is speed: you can access a cart almost instantly. A CD, in comparison has slow access, so the game actually in action has to be stored into the internal RAM. This in turn makes a CD console more expensive — as it needs both RAM and a disk drive. The advantage of CD is the amount of storage space.
2. Looks like it could be quite jolly.
3. Only if you handle her correctly (chortle).
4. Movies look okay, and the Saturn has some unique effects like zoom and picture-in-picture.
5. The expense: developers apart from Sega find battery back ups very costly, and Theme Park would need a biggie.
6. Sega realise they are excellent at doing software that people want. If that software is for PC, why not?
7. Calling a machine '16bit' or '32bit' is judged by looking at the central chip, or CPU which orchestrates all the other processors and is the most important. The Saturn CPU is 32bit RISC.

DEADLINE DAYS

Dear Steve
Please answer my questions, as it is the first time I've written to your magazine.
1. In the September issue, Steve was asked if there would be a Sonic 4, and he said they're probably would. But in the August issue of Sega Magazine, in reply to the same question, they said that Sonic and Knuckles WAS Sonic 4. Who is right? If it's Sega mag, why did noone know this at the time the game was released?
And if you are right, has work started on Sonic 4 yet?
2. Any more news on Brutal 2000 for the 32X?
3. What is your favourite game?
4. Do you think there will be any drop in the Saturn's price before Christmas?
Shelley Blair, Co. Antrim
GUS:What is all this guff? Surely what matters is if there will be another Sonic game for the Megadrive. Yes, I think there will be 'one last fling' on 16bit. There should also be a 'Sonic 4' on Saturn next year.
2. Who really gives a toss about Brutal?
3. Daytona USA.
4. I think it's possible.

RADIO 3

Dear Steve
1. In issue 25 there was a preview of Scooby Doo. I have had almost every issue after that but I have not seen a review. Why?
2. Should I buy Theme Park or Comix Zone?
3. Please put these games in best to worst order: Lethal Enforcers, Asterix: Power of the Gods; Primal Rage; EWJ2?
4. Will there be a Story of Thor 2 on the Megadrive?
Thanks a lot and keep up the good work.
Alex Harrison, Beighton
GUS:1. Pity about that. It's all part of the Sunsoft saga. Marubeni used to distribute Sunsoft games in this country, but both sides found it hard to get there act together. Sunsoft was wound up last year and Scooby Doo, a promising project, was one of the casualties. Someone should pick it up and finish it.
2. Are you clever? Yes? Get Theme Park.
3. EWJ 2 (probably); Primal Rage; Asterix; Lethal Enforcers.
4. Probably not.

NIGHT NURSE

Dear Steve
Or Gus, or whoever's doing the Q&A. Your magazine is the best Sega mag around and please answer my questions:
1. When will Lemmings 2 be out on Game Gear?
2. Is Lemmings 2 better than Lemmings, and what percentage would you give them?
3. Is Sonic Drift 2 better than Super Off Road on Game Gear?
4. Do you know any cheats for Super Off Road, Sonic Drift 2 or Lemmings?
Hugo Adams, Dorset
GUS:1. Never ever.
2. Never ever.
3. Guess so.
4. Look do you have these games?

Yes? Then why do you want my scores for them? No? Then why do you want tips for them?

SHEEP

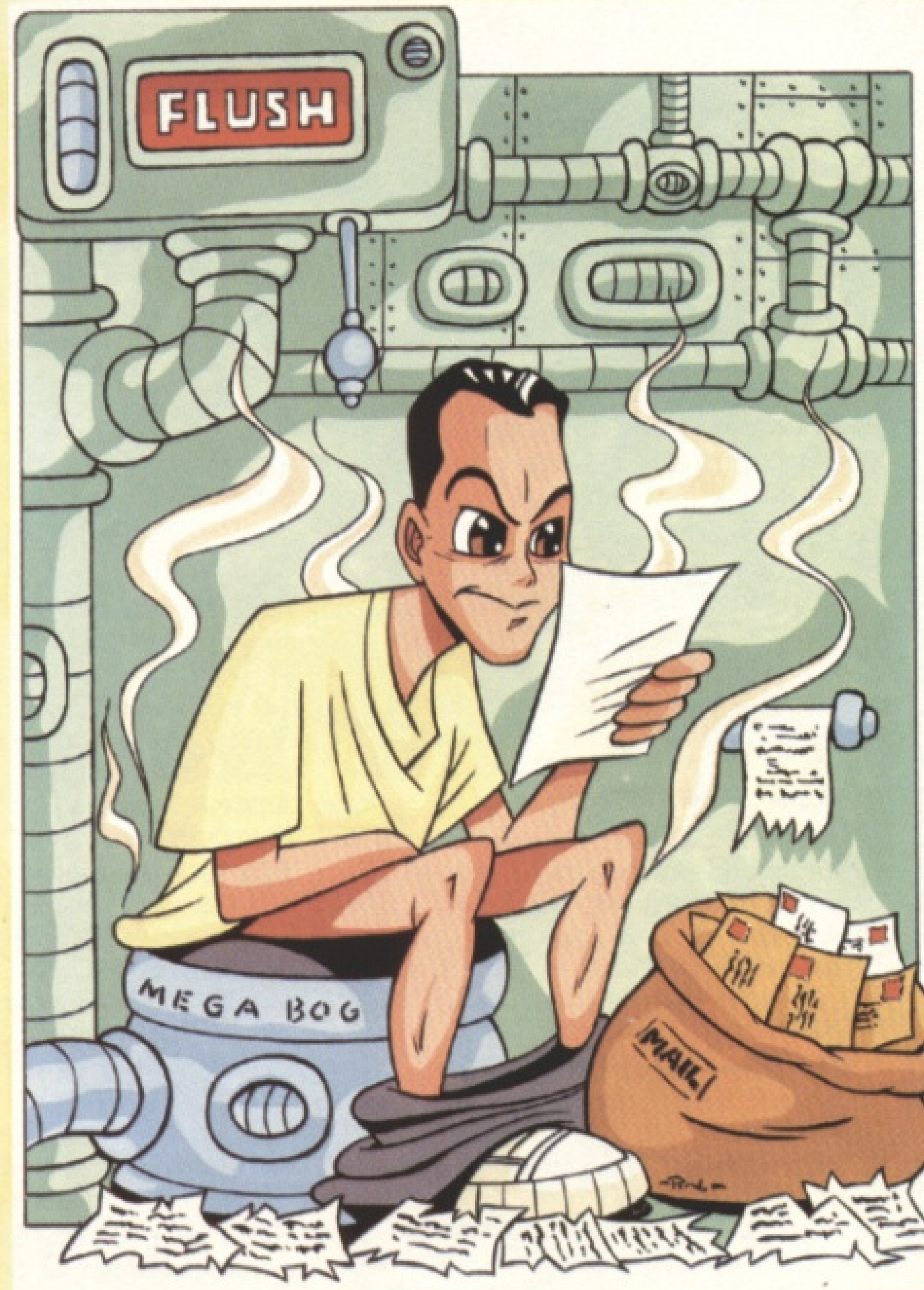
Dear Steve
Please answer my questions:
1. How much is the Saturn at the moment?
2. Do you think the price will be lowered by the start of the New Year and if so by how much?
3. What is the cartridge port on the Saturn used for?
4. What is the difference between Virtua Fighter and Virtua Fighter Remix?
5. Is Panzer Dragoon worth buying or should I wait for Magic Carpet?
6. Will they box the Saturn with an RF lead, or are they going to stick with the SCART lead?
7. I'm selling my Megadrive with 9 games including Virtua Racing, Street Fighter, Fifa '95, Landstalker and Chakan, with two three-button pads and one six-button pad. How much do you think I should sell them for?
Paul Mclair, Manchester
GUS:£399 with Virtua Fighter.
2. I think so, my guess is a £50 before Crimble.
3. At the moment, game development and RAM carts, but it's a flexible port.
4. Speed, texturing, presentation. Not gameplay.
5. Magic Carpet will be some time. Panzer's cool.
6. They'll stick with SCART, methinks.
7. As much as you can get.

SEX

Dear Steve
Congratulations on the new look mag. Please answer my questions for me (X-Men questions refer to the Sega versions).
1. Being a bit of an X-Men fan, I was wondering which of the three X-Men games I should buy. I like the look of the first one. What do you think?
2. In X-Men do all the characters have a satisfactory amount of moves?
3. What percentage did you give Virtua Racing?
4. I read an article in a Silica catalogue comparing the 32X to the Megadrive. It said the 32X could handle 50,000 polygons per second, and the Megadrive could handle none. How was it possible for Sega to make Virtua Racing?
5. Does Primal Rage need a six-button joypad?
6. I'm thinking of buying Lethal Enforcers with gun to go with Lethal 2, for £26. Is it worth it.
7. What's the X-men game with Spiderman in it like? It looks crap.
Nick, Gloucester
GUS:1. I'd prefer the second one.
2. In X-Men 2 the range is much wider.
3. 92%
4. The Megadrive needed the help of the one-off SVP chip, a special processor in the cart that explained the £70 tag.
5. I'd recommend it.
6. I wouldn't recommend it.
7. Knocking on a bit is Spidey and the X-men. Budget fodder.

CANDLE-LIGHT

Dear Steve
Congratulations on your ace magazine. The reviews are particularly outstanding and let's not forget the awesome Q&A. You are simply essential Sega reading. Now please answer my questions, go on!
1. Now that Saturn and Playstation are out, will the price of SNES and Megadrive games decrease rapidly?
2. Is it worth getting Pete Sampras '96 if you have Pete Sampras '95?
3. Are Boogerman, Batman Forever, Judge Dredd and Fever Pitch any good?
4. Will you be having a top 100 or all-time greats game section in your mag soon?
5. Your tips book was good, but there was no tip to defeat Neo Zeed on Revenge of Shinobi. How in God's name do you do it?
6. What are your thoughts on Wayne Gretzky's Hockey, New Adventures of Batman and Robin, Mr Nutz 2?
7. Would you please print some Game Genie codes?
8. What's best — Fifa or Fever Pitch?
9. How many games have been released for the Megadrive in the UK, roughly?
Paul Davies, Caerphilly
GUS:1. Probably not.
2. It's not an essential purchase for Sampras non-addicts.
3. All apart from Boogerman are considerable as buys.
4. Perhaps some sort of glossy retrospective, but normally in other mags these things are an excuse for laziness.
5. Practice, child.
6. I thought Gretzky's was a pile of ice bull — Time Warner got a bit shirty of that one. New adventures — cool; Mr Nutz — so-so.
7. No. Game genie sucks.
8. I prefer Fifa, it must be said. Steve's a Fever man.
9. About 400-450



BEDTIME STORY

Dear Steve
Would you please answer these questions:
1. Is there going to be a Cannon Fodder 2 on the Megadrive?
2. Any news on Streets of Rage 4 and when is it coming out?
3. When is Super Streetfighter II Turbo coming out on Megadrive?
4. Is Earthworm Jim 2 going to be a pile of crap like the first?
5. Why is the next Micro Machines called Micro Machines 2 '96? Why don't they just call it Micro Machines 3 instead of all the '96 crap?
Andrew Moriaty, Warrington
GUS:1. We hoped there would, but I doubt it.
2. No news or indications of a game of that name from Sega.
3. Forget that one for a start!
4. Hey — Jim rocks!
5. You have an attitude problem. 'Micro Machines 3' is for the big leap forward: the next gen.

TUCK IN

Dear Steve
I have recently bought Theme Park for the Megadrive. I can't work out how to put the rollercoaster together. Could you tell me please?
Bill
GUS:Pritt stick. Works a treat. Or try the instruction manual.

Now about that picture. Yeah, it has to go, and it will. Stand by for next month's amazing Gus Q&A picture, No expense spared and no answers stinted. It's the Q&A event of the year

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FOR SALE Megadrive £60, Mercs, Terminator, Sonic 1, Kid Chameleon, £5. Desert Strike, Sonic 2, £10. SOR2, Micro 1, Road Rash 2, Jungle Strike, Urban Strike, SSF2, £25. MK2, EWJ, £30. VR Racing £35. All together £350 worth over £920. Plus, on Mega CD - Silpheed £20 and Jaguar XJ220 £15. Everything in excellent condition and at a bargain price. Phone Simon on 01932 882321 after 6pm.

MEGADRIVE 2 Mega CD 2, 20 cart, 6 CDs, Menacer and 6 game cart, Game Genie and code book, lots of mags, also case for Megadrive. All boxed with instructions, excellent condition. Tel 01264 358281 all areas buyer collects £500.

MEGA DRIVE for sale with 12 games including SFII, MK, FIFA, Flashback. Includes 4 joypads. Worth £250, sell for £150. Tel. 01932 850803 and ask for details. Also Amiga in VGC. Lots of accessories, sell for £80.

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MEGADRIVE AND 32X with VR and Star Wars. Megadrive comes with over £1000 worth of games including MK2, FIFA 95, Pete Sampras and many more. Also 4 control pads, worth over £1500, selling for £250 ono. Contact Jas on 01234 765337.

32X AND Megadrive for sale. Games are Star Wars Arcade, Doom, SF2 SCE, Sonic, Urban Strike, Mega Games I, MKII, four pads (two are 6-button), lots of mags, games stand, all boxed except Mega Drive, £300 ono. James 0181 304 8822.

WANTED SHINING Force One. Telephone 01440 61020.

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SATURN, UK version, 2 pads, Virtua Fighter, Panzer Dragoon, Daytona USA, £200 cash. Phone 0493 368166, ask for Andrew. Buyer must collect (Great Yarmouth/Norfolk).

FOR SALE Megadrive games, Jurassic Park, SFII £15 each, Micro Machines 2 £30, Sunset Riders £10. SNES games, Bomberman £20, DKC £30, Gameboy Magni-Lite, power adaptor, 2 games inc. Kirby, carry case, £80 ono. Nik 01202 (Bournemouth) 393982. Buyer must collect.

WANTED STAR Trek Generations, boxed with instructions on Game Gear, will pay up to £12. Call Sheila on 01285 657867.

HI! 14 year old boy looking for boy or girl penpal between 13 and 15 years old. I like going to cinema, art, rock music (not heavy metal). Write to Paul Wilson, 17 Cavin Drive, Castlemilk, Glasgow G45 9TT.

MEGA DRIVE, Mega CD and 32X games for sale: Doom £25, MK2 32X £25, Star Wars Arcade £20, Story of Thor £25, Shining Force 2 £25, Snatcher £20 plus others. Phone Andy 01235 848786 after 6pm.

I WILL swap JWWS, Mickey Mania, MKII or Micro Machines 2 for Theme Park or PGA 3. Phone Edward on 0121 604 9131.

MD GAMES for sale: Virtua Racing £30, FIFA £20, Barkley Shut Up and Jam £15, all for £50 plus free joypad. 32X game: Metal Head £30 (all boxed with manual) Phone Danny on 01224 483906. After 5pm.

ROLE CALL: The dedicated RPG fanzine. First 2 issues available price £1.20 each. Issue 2 contains Popful Mail and Shining Force CD reviews, issue 3 will cover Phantasy Star 4. Contact Rachel Ryan, 25 Oakdene Avenue, Woolston, Cheshire WA1 4NU.

WILL SWAP Sonic, Gynoug, California Games, Alex Kidd for Olympic Gold, Sensible Soccer or two for Power Drive. Others considered. Tel 01770 700254 ask for David. Cameronia Hotel, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran, Scotland KA27 8PZ.

MEGA DRIVE Mega CD, 14 carts, 15 CDs, 2 joypads, Bomberman, Snooker, SFII, Final Fight, Silpheed, Double Switch, Thunder Hawk, Batman Returns, Flashback, worth over £1000 in total - sell for £300. Phone Brian on 0151 708 0187 now!

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MEGA DRIVE and Mega CD for sale. Many games, 2 joypads, £160 the lot. Call Kev on 0151 726 1996 between 6-7pm.

BOXED MEGADRIVE with 2 joypads and 14 games including SF2, Micro Machines 2, NBA Jam and Lion King. Plus boxed Master System 2 with 2 joypads and 6 games. All this for only £200. Phone Matthew on 01689 822657 after 5pm.

MEGA CD II with 6 games: Road Avenger, Night Trap, Thunderhawk, Final Fight, Ground Zero Texas and Microcosm. Will sell for £200 ono. Also Gameboy with 4 games will sell for £40 ono. If interested ring 01487 830203 ask for Luke.

32X FOR Sale with Doom, Virtua Racing Deluxe and Star Wars. Excellent condition £180 ono. Call 01980 653622 (near Salisbury, Wilts).

MEGA DRIVE, 32X and Mega CD for sale. 34 games for all of the above and accessories included. Worth over £1000, Silling for £450. Contact Shaun on 01827 873414 before 12pm.

32X with Megadrive, including VR Deluxe and MKII (32X) all boxed as new, worth £350, sell for £215. 01844 216993 6pm+

AMIGA CD32, 8 great games including Cannon Fodder, Sensible Soccer, Gunship 2000, quick sale needed thus £130. Call 01844 216993 6pm+

MEGA DRIVE, 32X, Mega CD for sale, games include Doom, Star Wars Arcade. 6 games for MD - games include Virtua Racing, Pete Sampras Tennis. 8 games for Mega CD including Thunder Hawk, Batman Returns, Jaguar XJ220, will split, £350. (01555) 773127 Scotland.

ROLE CALL - The definitive all-format console RPG fanzine, packed with news, tips, reviews and features galore. Whatever your tastes, whatever your system, if you play RPGs you need Role Call! Contact Rachel Ryan on 01925 490910 for more details.

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NEXT MONTH

UNOFFICIALLY – WE'RE OFFICIAL!

Yes, you heard us right. From next month we'll be MEAN MACHINES SEGA with a funny curvy Sega. If you also catch Sega Magazine, you'll be aware that they're concentrating on Saturn stuff as of their next issue. MEAN MACHINES will be covering absolutely everything, with some great perks for ourselves, like:

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So you can see why it wasn't hard for us to sell out. Seriously though, there will be no compromises. Yes, we're Sega fans. For some mags it seems a crime to admit that they enjoy playing games. We do, but we'll still be prepared to give a game, even a Sega game, a good kicking if it is deserved. There's no cover up, no 'deals'. What Sega get is a top-quality showcase for their games – accurate reporting and the most informed readership.
It's great for everyone apart from the saps in 'competition' with us. I expect a few glum faces when the truth finally sinks in: We Have The Power.



THE BIG STUFF:

We'll also have:
Earthworm Jim 2: The exclusive review with a stunning free gift
The Horde
Virtua Racing
JVC Boxing
Pocohontas
WWF Saturn
Cool Spot Saturn
Virtua Fighter 2
X-Men on 32X
Shellshock
Mortal Kombat 3 Saturn
Alien Trilogy
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Streetfighter: The Movie
...the list is endless...

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